RECOLLECTIONS AND LETTERS OF ERNEST RENAN

Recollections and Letters

OF

ERNEST RENAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

NEW YORK
CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY
104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE

COPYRIGHT, 1892, BY
CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY.

All rights reserved.

THE MERSHON COMPANY PRESS,
RAHWAY, N. J.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE,	v
EMMA KOSILIS,	1
SUPPLEMENT TO PAGE 119 OF "SOUVENIRS D'ENFANCE,"	30
THE DOUBLE PRAYER,	35
SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE STATUE OF BRIZEUX AT LORIENT, SEPTEMBER 9, 1888,	44
LOVE AND RELIGION,	49
THE CELTIC DINNER,	55
THE GAULS IN BRITTANY,	68
CAN ONE WORK IN THE COUNTRY? A SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE SORBONNE AT A GENERAL SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF THE LEARNED SOCIETIES, JUNE 15, 1889,	72
SPEECH AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE FÉLIBRES, AT SCEAUX, JUNE 21, 1891,	83
MEMORIES OF THE "JOURNAL DES DÉBATS,"	91
LETTER TO M. BERTHELOT, MINISTER,	111
A WORD ON THE EXPOSITION. LETTER TO M. JULES LEMAÎTRE,	123
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTENARY OF POMPEII. LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE "JOURNAL DES DÉBATS,"	125
THE PORTRAITS OF ST. PAUL. LETTER TO M. MÉZIÈRES OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY,	146

PAGE

Reply to the Speech of Reception into the French Academy of M. Jules Claretie, February 21, 1889, ... 156
Lecture before the Alliance for the Propagation of the French Language, February 2, 1888, 186
Speech Delivered at Montmorency, on the Occasion of the Removal of the Ashes of Mickiewicz, June 29, 1890, ... 198
Victor Hugo, ... 203
George Sand, ... 209
M. Cousin, ... 214
Madame Hortense Cornu, ... 218
Queen Sophie of Holland, ... 233
Speech Delivered at the Funeral of M. Ernest Havet, December 24, 1889, ... 238
Speech at the Funeral of M. Cuvillier-Fleury, October 21, 1887, ... 244
Speech Delivered at the Inauguration of the Statue of M. About, December 20, 1887, . . 250
Letter to M. Gustave Flaubert on the "Temptation of Saint Anthony," 254
Henri Frédéric Amiel, ... 262
A Philosophical Examination of Conscience, . 295

PREFACE.

THE composition of this little volume was suggested to me, so far as the first part is concerned, at least, by my dear friend Calmann-Lévy, in one of the last visits which he paid me at the Collège de France, about the month of May last. We calculated together the delay which the completion of the fourth volume of the "History of the People of Israel" would entail. The result of our calculation was, that it could be done only for the end of the year 1892. "Could you not," he said to me, "give me, in the meantime, a volume of miscellanies which could appear next winter?"

I enumerated to him several instructive articles which had never been collected together. "No," he said to me; "take me as the measure of the public. What we wish from you, just now, is a volume in the style of your 'Souvenirs,' interesting for everybody, simple, personal——" "I have," I told him, "several Breton papers, made up of old images, already firmly fixed. Perhaps others will occur to me. But, in order to form a volume from them, years would be required." "You have also some short speeches, some lectures. Could not you

with these compose a volume which would form a sort of sequel to your "Souvenirs"?

I have on several occasions reproached the minds of our day with being too subjective, with busying themselves too much over themselves, with not being sufficiently carried away, absorbed by the object, that is to say, by that which is before us, by the world, nature, history. It is always bad to talk of one's self. That presupposes that one thinks a great deal about one's self; but time devoted to thinking of one's self is a theft from God, as people would have said in former days. At the time when I began to make that series of my confidences, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, I met Jules Sandeau, who told me that he had found pleasure in reading them. "*Dulcia vitia!*" I answered him; "the public, which is indulgent now, will take its revenge some day. And how shall I know when it is on the point of changing its mind?" . . . . "No, Renan," he said to me, "the public will always be glad when you speak to it of yourself." Sandeau's opinion has led me rather far, it may be; but let my friends who treat these little volumes as puerilities cease their fears; I shall commit no more. I have been playing a rather dangerous game for some time: talking incessantly of dying, and gaining constantly in health. I am afraid of being soon called upon to keep my word, under penalty of no longer being taken seriously. Having entered upon one course of action, I am

speedily assailed by this verse, which Augustin Thierry often quoted to me to hold me back, when he thought that I was going too far :

Claudite jam en rivos pueri ; sat prata biberunt.*

A few days after the conversation which I held with my dear Calmann, I heard one morning of the fatal blow which had taken him from us. Great was my grief. Calmann was one of the best men whom I have ever known. He really belonged to the tribe of those who love peace ; he had no presumption, no pride, none of the defects which lead men astray and render them unhappy. The serenity of his soul was that of a good man, sure of being in accord with superior rule. He had true piety, that which comes from a tradition received by the heart, and he followed Hillet's precept : " Be the disciple of Aaron, who loved peace." The frightful egotism of this epoch had not attacked his house ; for he was not an egotist himself. The profound sentiment of affection and respect which his collaborators cherished for him was touching. He had solved for himself the great difficulty of our time, which is to make numerous subordinates contribute to a common work. He solved it by making himself beloved by them, by making them love what they did. Ah ! if all the chiefs of great industries did the same, the ulcers which are devouring us, and which

* Close the gates, boys ; the meadows have drunk enough.

threaten the life of modern societies, would soon be healed.

It was in his family, above all, that he was himself, calm, happy, sure of recovering new life in a united family, in perfect accord with him. Every day he played for an hour with his grandsons, tasting that great joy of seeing the windows of life open on one side, when they were closing on the other. The veneration which he cherished for his brother, during the latter's life and after his death, arose from the admiration which he felt from childhood for the astounding intelligence of Michel; that marvelously lucid brain, that surprising activity subjugated him. He had not created the house, but he was well constituted to maintain and continue it. His rare judgment enabled him to avoid all errors; thanks to him, the great publishing establishment founded by Michel remained at the service of French letters, a powerful instrument in disseminating them. The hours which he came to spend with me restored my youth. I feel the need of uprightness about me; I like to have the pages on which I write well ruled, and, as I grow older, my great joy is to retrace old memories. Farewell, dear Calmann!

It is under the auspices of this friendly name, that I present once more, to an indulgent public, a volume composed of those little frivolities which, while evoking thought, render life amiable and cause it to be endured. Nevertheless, I have in-

troduced into it a little philosophy; in particular the examination of my conscience for 1889. I have not modified my manner of regarding the universe materially since that time. I perceive, more and more clearly, that we know very little of what we would like to know. In philosophy, one must have confidence in the infinite goodness, and guard one's self against vain eagerness. One gains nothing by importuning truth, by soliciting it every day. That is a bad sign, if you like; truth is deaf and cold, and our ardor has no effect upon her. Die neue Philosophie—Die neuere Philosophie—Die neueste Philosophie (The new Philosophy—The newer Philosophy—The newest Philosophy). Good Heavens! how childish are these rising degrees of emphasis! Why thus dispute with each other for priority in error! Let us learn to wait; perhaps there is nothing at the end; let us learn to be ignorant, that the future may know. Who knows? Perhaps truth is sad; let us not be in such a haste to learn it.

I am pained by the sort of agitation which I perceive in the young people who, by the privilege of their age, should be so serene. One would say that this young generation had read neither the history of philosophy nor Ecclesiastes. "What has been is that which will be. . . . ." But, dear children, it is useless to give yourselves such a headache. Amuse yourselves, since you are only twenty years old; work also. If we know nothing of meta-

physics, on the other hand, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, and history, are full of revelations. Oh! what things you will know in forty or fifty years, which I shall never know! And then, what humanitarian problems you will see solved! What is the Emperor William III.? What will become of the conflict of European nationalities? What turn will social questions take? Will anything come out of the Socialistic movement, properly speaking? What will be the fate of the Papacy in the near future? Alas! I shall die before I have seen these things, and you will know them! It is asserted that there exist in Lebanon, ancient Arabic testaments, where the dead man makes it a condition of his donations, that the people shall come and inform him, in his tomb, when the French become masters of the land once more. There are moments, in fact, when I say to myself, that there is a piece of news which, whispered furtively in my ear, in my grave, would make me quiver to the point of coming to life again. But I have too often read in the Bible that one really knows nothing in the depths of sheol of what is taking place on the earth, that one hears nothing there, that one remembers nothing, to put any clause of that sort at the end of my will.

Why rise in revolt against truths as old as the world? Was it only yesterday that it was discovered that man is a fragile and perishable creature? I am not one of those of whom that very ancient

prophet speaks, *Qui nihil patiebatur super contritione Joseph.*

I pity that poor Joseph, I pity the young men who are devoured by a pessimism which will not be consoled. We frequently read on ancient tombs: "Courage, dear so and so; no one is immortal; Hercules himself died." One may find the consolation rather feeble; it is real, nevertheless. . . . . Marcus Aurelius, dear friends, was superior to all others in goodness, and Marcus Aurelius was content with it. Have we ever believed that we should not die? Let us die calmly, in the communion of humanity and the religion of the future, when we have accomplished our destiny. The existence of the world is assured for a long time to come. France, in her giddy comet-flight, will perhaps come out of it better than certain indications would lead one to believe. The future of science is guaranteed; for, in the scientific balance, everything is added, and nothing is lost. Error does not found anything; no error lasts long. Let us be tranquil. In less than a hundred thousand years the earth will have discovered the means of supplying the place of coal, and, up to a certain point of virtue there will be bad times to traverse. . . . . Moral value is on the ebb, that is sure; abnegation has almost disappeared; we see the day coming when everything will be syndicates, where organized egotism will take the place of love and devotion. Our century has created more and

more perfect tools, without perceiving that the use of these tools supposes a certain degree of morality, of conscience, of devotion, in work or in man. The two things which, up to this time, have resisted the fall of respect—the army and the church—both founded on illusions, will soon be carried away in the general torrent. It is of no consequence ; the resources of humanity are infinite. Eternal works will be accomplished, without the foundation of living forces, always rising to the surface, being ever exhausted. Science, above all, will continue to astonish us by its revelations, which will put the infinite of space and time in the place of a petty world conceived according to the measure of imagination of a child. Is the need of eternal consciousness which torments us, moreover, a simple illusion ? No, no. On such a matter, formal negations are as rash as absolute affirmations. Religion is true in the infinite. When God shall be complete he will be just. I am convinced that virtue will turn out definitely, one of these days, to have been the better part. Let us stand firm ; let us endure the raillery of those who pretend to be better informed. Merit lies in affirming duty against apparent evidence. If virtue were a good investment, business people, who are very sagacious, would all have noticed the fact ; they would all be virtuous. No, it is a bad investment in the finite order, but, in the infinite, parallels meet ; in the infinite, negations vanish, contradictions are merged.

Nothing proves to us that there exists in the world a central consciousness, a soul of the universe; but nothing proves the contrary, either. We do not remark in the universe any sign of deliberate and thoughtful action. We may affirm that no action of this sort has existed for millions of centuries. But thousands of centuries are nothing in infinity. What we call long is very short in comparison with another measure of size. When the chemist arranges an experiment that is to last for years, everything which takes place in his retorts is regulated by the laws of absolute unconsciousness; which does not mean that a will has not intervened at the beginning of the experiment, and that it will not intervene at the end. Millions of microbes may have been produced in the interval; if these microbes had had sufficient intelligence, they might, by reasoning on the brief period permitted to their observations, allow themselves to go so far as to say: "The world has no room for special volitions." And they would be mistaken.

What we call time is, perhaps, a minute between two miracles. "We do not know;" that is all that one can say clearly about that which lies beyond the finite. Let us deny nothing, let us assert nothing, let us hope. An immense moral, and, perhaps, intellectual decline will follow the day when religion disappears from the world. We can get along without religion, because others have it for us. Even those who do not believe are

swept along by the more or less believing masses; but woe to us on that day when the masses have no longer any enthusiasm. One can do much less with a humanity which does not believe in the immortality of the soul than with a humanity which does believe in it. A man's value depends upon the proportion of religious sentiment which he has carried away with him from his early education, and which perfumes his whole life. The religious zones of humanity live on a shadow. We live only upon the shadow of a shadow. What will the people who come after us live upon?

Let us not quarrel over the quantity or the formula of religion; let us confine ourselves to not denying it; let us preserve the category of the unknown, the possibility of dreaming. Christianity has rendered us too exacting, too hard to please. We want heaven, nothing less. Let us content ourselves with smaller profits. A few years ago when M. de Rothschild was upholding with vivacity, in the Israelite consistory, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, a learned Israelite of the most ancient school said to me: "Can one understand that? So rich a man—and he wants a paradise to boot! Let him leave that to us poor devils."

The Middle Ages entertained very philosophical views on this point. Beasts receive in this world the reward for the good that they have done. It was related that some nuns had trained a hind to

be very devout to the Virgin. The little animal knelt upon a praying-stool before the sacred image; it was full of piety. As hinds possess no immortal soul, and, consequently, cannot enter into paradise, the nuns were very anxious that their little pet should have here below those pleasures which it craved; they stuffed it with preserves. Very nearly the same thing can be read in the life of the Fathers of the desert. The lion which St. Anthony made come for the purpose of burying St. Paul, worked away with his claws with astonishing zeal. By way of wages, St. Anthony bestows upon him his benediction, the effect of which is to make him immediately meet a sheep, which he devours. Where is the justice for the sheep? you will say to me. Ah! that is precisely what is not clear; or rather, it is clear that, in the whole organization of the world, there is not a trace of justice for the sheep.

Let us accustom ourselves, like the nuns' hind, to be content with little dainties, let us try to acquire a taste for them. Let us be austere toward ourselves, but let us not impoverish life. On all these points we must not listen to the literary subtleties of our day. Let us not deprive humanity of its joys; let us find our joy in watching it enjoy itself. The joy of others is a great part of our joy; it constitutes the great reward of the upright life, which is gayety.

I have been much reproached for preaching

that religion which is easy in appearance, but which, in reality, is the most difficult of all. Not everyone is gay who wills to be so. For that, one must come of an ancient race, which has not suffered surfeit; one must also be content with one's life. My life has been that which I wished, that which I conceived as the best. If I had to live it over again, I would not make any great change in it. On the other hand, I am a little afraid of the future. I shall have my biography and my legend. My legend? . . . . Having some experience of ecclesiastical writers, I can sketch out in advance the way in which it will be written up in Spanish in some Catholic review of Santa Fé, in the year 2000. The legends of the enemies of the official church are all run in the same mold. The end which the book of the Acts attributes to Judas "crepuit medius" (he burst in twain) forms the perfunctory base of them. For one part of historical tradition, I shall end like that, in a manner combined from Arius and Voltaire. Heavens! how black I shall be! I shall be so all the more, because the Church, when she feels that she is lost, will end with malice; she will bite like a mad dog.

In spite of all this, I have confidence in reason. The enlightened portion of humanity, the only one for which I care, will form some esteem for me. Five hundred years hence the commission on the "Literary History of France," of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-letters, will write my notice.

It will be obliged to combat documents which will tell it that I received a million from M. de Rothschild for writing the "Life of Jesus," nearly as much from the Emperor Napoleon III., who, later on, having dismissed me, gave me a rich pension on the *Journal des Savants*. The commission will unravel all this, in accordance with the rules of criticism; I am sure that its verdict will be admitted by sensible people.

In reality, I fear nothing but apochryphal texts. There exists already a considerable mass of texts, sayings, and anecdotes which are attributed to me, and amuse the Catholic press. The clergy, as a rule, quote at second hand; they buy few books; they take their quotations from the petty clerical reviews of the lower class. Already, almost everything that the Bishops quote as from me is fabricated, or full of contradictions. I entreat the friends of truth, in the future, not to accept, as coming from me, anything but what has appeared in the volumes published by Lévy. The sayings and conversations which are attributed to me are nearly all invented. At the epoch when I published the "Vie de Jésus," journals paid by the Jesuits published, as mine, counterfeited autographs against which I have never entered a complaint. I repeat, five hundred years hence, the commission on the "Literary History" will be of the opinion that this proves nothing. And then, five hundred years is a very long time. Man has such puerile ideas about

death that he imagines he is less dead when he is buried than he is five hundred years later. We are less solicitous as to what will be said about us after the lapse of several centuries than of what is said about us on the day of our funeral, a day when we are still alive and the slumbering hero of the festival.

I confess that I should not feel indifferent at being the object of a fine funeral in Paris. There are, in the new people of Paris, materialistic sides which I no longer comprehend ; but the people of Paris in former days were brave, chivalrous, friends of the right, absurd, idealistic. Oh ! how I have loved them ! To be for such people as that the cause of a day's repose, of joy, of love, and of virtue, would make me very happy. And if they were to introduce into it a little feasting and revelry, oh ! really, what harm would that do ? Popular festivals, even when their character is sad, always have a little the air of a fair ; for the masses need to purchase on the street, and a throng of poor people are glad to do a bit of peddling on that day, and earn a little money.

I have related elsewhere how a pious person of the neighborhood of Nantes, who evidently believes that I live in the midst of feasts and dissipations, writes me the following words every three months : "There is a hell." This person, whom I thank for his good intentions, does not alarm me as much as he thinks. I should like to be sure that there is a

hell, for I prefer the hypothesis of hell to that of nothingness. Many theologians, think that, for the damned, it is better to be than not to be, and that the unhappy wretches are perhaps accessible to more than one good thought. For my part, I imagine that if the Eternal, in his severity, were to send me to that bad place, I should succeed in escaping from it. I would send up to my Creator a supplication which would make him smile. The course of reasoning by which I would prove to him that it was through his fault that I was damned, would be so subtle that he would find difficulty in replying to it. Perhaps he would admit me to paradise, where people must be dreadfully bored. He certainly does allow that Satan, criticism, to enter, from time to time, among the children of God to amuse the assembly a little.

To tell the truth, as I have already allowed it to be understood elsewhere, the fate which would suit me best is purgatory, a charming place, where many charming romances begun on earth must be continued, and which one can be in no haste to leave, especially in view of the few attractions of paradise. What sometimes renders me not so very anxious to attain that place of delight is its monotony. Can one change one's place there? Heavens! how quickly one will have exhausted one's neighbor! Trips from planet to planet would suit me well enough; but the devout old women, who, they say, will form the majority of the elect,

would not suit me at all. May God's will be done!

Celestial Father, I thank thee for life! It has been sweet and precious to me, surrounded as I have been by excellent beings who have not allowed me to doubt thy designs. I have not been exempt from sin; I have had the defects of all men; but I have always pulled the bridle of reason in time. Whatever those who call themselves thy priests may say, I have not committed any very evil actions. I have loved truth, and I have made sacrifices for it; I have desired thy day, and I still believe in it. Thy joys are promised to the sincere man; the frivolous man shall not approach thee. During my first journey in Syria, I received hospitality in a patriarchal house of Lebanon, where there was an aged father, of great piety, who conceived a great affection for me. When the "Life of Jesus" appeared, he heard many sermons against me, and entered into great doubts. He applied to his son Dominique, who was well posted on French affairs and who had accompanied me in my travels. "Tell me, my son, what are M. Renan's errors. Let us proceed in due order. Among the things which must be believed there is, first, God the Father. Let us see—does he believe in God the Father?" "Oh! yes," answered Dominique, "on that point his solidity defies attack." "That is a great deal, my son; that is a great deal," replied the old man.

Let us not renounce God the Father; let us not

deny the possibility of a final day of justice. We have never been in one of those tragic situations where God is, in some sort, the necessary confidant and consoler. What would you have a pure woman, accused unjustly, do, if not raise her eyes to heaven? or the victim of an irreparable judicial error, a man who dies in the fulfillment of an act of self-devotion—a noble and peaceful man massacred by barbarous soldiers? Where shall we seek the true witness if not on high, in unknown space? Even in our peaceful lives, where great trials are rare, how often we feel the need of appealing to the absolute verity of things, of saying to it, "Speak, speak." The moment of death must be one of those moments. I think that very few men have died without an appeal to God, without prayer. The moments of this sort are, perhaps, those in which we are in the right. But the strange thing about it is that we never obtain the slightest sign to show that our protests have touched anything. When Nimrod launched his arrows against heaven, they came back to him stained with blood. We obtain no response. O God! whom we adore in spite of ourselves, to whom we pray twenty times a day without knowing it, Thou art in verity a hidden God.

I should be glad to have this small volume give the reader a little of the pleasure which I have taken in composing it. It completes my "Souvenirs," and they are an essential part of my work.

Whether they augment or diminish my philosophical authority, they explain me—they show the origin of my verdicts, true or false. My mother, with whom I was so poor, by whose side I have toiled for hours, pausing only to say to her: "Mamma, are you satisfied with me?" the little friends of my childhood, who enchanted me with their discreet, pretty ways; my sister Henriette, so lofty, so pure, who, at twenty years of age, led me into the path of reason, and lent me her hand to traverse a difficult passage, have embalmed the beginning in an aroma which will last until death. I was brought up by women and by priests; therein lies the whole explanation of my good qualities and my defects. In Brittany, the women are superior to the men, scold the men, despise them. The priest, also, formerly enjoyed a great superiority over laymen; the women loved their parish priest much better than they did their husbands. The sort of embarrassment which I feel in the company of those who are not consecrated to moral and intellectual things, arises from the scorn which my masters taught me to entertain for laymen. There is a priest's and a woman's disdain in my awkwardness. In my manner of feeling I am three-quarters a woman.

One loves thoroughly, all one's life, only the heads of little girls which one has seen at the age of sixteen. That is what incessantly carries me back to those old images, now almost effaced. If

I am wrong in this, it is the indulgence which the public showed to my "Souvenirs" which has induced me to do evil. I must say that my philosophy counts for something in this matter. On many points, it seems to me that people of the world have the right of things against the scholastics. They see better the living whole. Not a single philosopher has ever turned his attention to love. Now, I persist in thinking that love is a strange mystery, and the best proof that many things which go on in us proceed from beings which are in us but are not us. On this point I am full of discourse. I always wish to begin over again all that I have said.

How, you will say, does it come that you talk so continually of that of which you know so little? Oh! here I enter my protest. In these matters, to be too well posted is to be case-hardened. Arnauld was right in his book on "Frequent Communion." The Jansenists thought, very justly, that too frequent use of the communion destroys the taste for it, decreases its savor. The same thing may be said of love. Those who speak the best of it are those who have misused it the least, and have considered it as a religious act. Yes, a religious act, a sacred moment in which man tastes the immense joy of begetting life, rises above his habitual mediocrity, sees his faculties of enjoyment and sympathy exalted to their highest limit. Dear and touching aberration! love is as eternal as religion. Love is

the best proof of God ; it is the umbilical cord between us and nature—our true communion with the infinite.

I often reproach myself, at my age, when my mind should be occupied with nothing but eternal truths, for devoting a part of my days, which are numbered, to recalling thoughts which many people would characterize as frivolous. My excuse is that I have given myself up to this work only after having completed the task of my old age, the "History of the People of Israel." Many and able readers have been so good as to charge me to forbid myself all episodical labor until I shall have completed this work, which is the principal work of my life. I have followed their advice. The "History of the People of Israel, down to the Appearance of Christianity," is finished. I shall still require a long time to correct the proofs : but the foundation of the book is settled. If I were to die to-morrow, the book could appear, with the assistance of a good corrector. The arch of the bridge, which still remained for me to construct between Judaism and Christianity, is established. I have succeeded, so far as is possible, in showing the special soil whence Jesus sprung. Thus my principal duty is accomplished. At the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-lettres, the work on the rabbis is also nearing its end, and the *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum* is in excellent hands. All this causes me great inward satisfaction, and this

is what makes me believe that, after having paid nearly all my debts, I may well amuse myself a little, and, without scruple, surrender myself to the joy of gathering together these leaves which are often slight. My time has been so good to me, it has pardoned me so many faults, that I hope it will exercise its customary indulgence toward me on this occasion also.

RECOLLECTIONS

AND

LETTERS OF ERNEST RENAN.

EMMA KOSILIS.

ROSMAPAMON IN LOUANNEC.

AMONG the traits of idealism in the Breton character there is one which I have reproached myself for not having sufficiently explained in my "Souvenirs d'Enfance"—it is the capacity to live and die of a single idea, of love unuttered, unvaried, persistent even unto death.

This trait has been recalled to me by those Breton servants who, having been brought to Paris in honest families, can remain for years without going out, who traverse Paris without looking at it, with unseeing eyes; who ask but one thing, that they may live alone, apart, seen of no one. Nearly always a secret thought fills their being. Mystic reverie is sometimes mingled with it; but it is rarely the principal cause of this obstinate need for silence.

Most frequently, its foundation is a love of their childhood, repressed, chimerical, backed by an excessively strong moral instinct. Unconfessed externally, this sentiment reigns within them in an absolute silence. Nothing exists for such a state of soul, nothing pleases, save the precious thought. They caress it for hours and hours. It may suffice for years, and it renders them indifferent to everything else.

Ancient physiology designated this sort of temperament as melancholy, and attributed to it all the extraordinary things which occur in this world. There are, in fact, very few strong lives at whose base we do not find the *secretum meum mihi*—the personal secrecy of the great dwellers in solitude, and of great men. The love of solitude ordinarily arises from an inward thought which devours all about it. One day I quoted to my sister the saying of Thomas à Kempis : *in angello cum libello.** The remark struck her as so beautiful that she took to repeating it to me incessantly as her motto. Life restricted to one's self and God is the condition requisite to act upon men and to conquer them.

The great patriotic, scientific, and charitable applications of life, come from prolonged intercourse with one's self. Mankind will never know anything of these extraordinary examples of moral force in which the Eternal rejoices, that jealous wit-

* In a nook with a book.

ness of souls, who reserves for himself the most beautiful spectacles. The *delectatio morosa*—the morose pleasure of the Middle Ages—is, in one sense, the supreme formula of the universe.

The slowness of body in the Breton race, that possibility, even among the children, of remaining motionless for hours, springs, in great part, from that necessity for long periods of voluptuousness, of idle contemplation, if I may venture to characterize it thus, which combines ill with external activity, and seems to exact complete repose of the senses. Tedium does not exist for such natures; what others call *ennui* is for them profound delight, a soliloquy in the infinite. This race has few desires, few needs; in love it knows how to wait. My sister related to me, on this subject, an anecdote which she admired greatly; it was the history of the mother of one of her friends. She took pleasure in it, because it was a case of heroic love, which corresponded singularly well with her own character. I had forgotten this history; some recent circumstances have recalled it to my memory. My sister has frequently told me the name of the respectable person to whom she had dedicated so great a worship. I shall call her Emma Kosilis.*

She was not of perfect beauty; but her face had an indescribable charm, my sister affirmed. Her eyes were exquisitely languorous, her eyelids, which

* Kosilis means "old church."

expressed the most imperceptible quivers of timid modesty, had the air of possessing a soul. Her skin was so fine that the slightest acceleration of life was betrayed in it by fugitive blushes, the sign of a secret which she did not reveal. In a word, it was the same candid and pure quality which, in that little Breton, Mademoiselle de Quéroualle, made a profound impression on the heart of Charles II.

It was her virginal complexion which, beneath the coif of the little participants in a Pardon in Brittany, seemed to evoke a flood of innocence, which rendered you better for hours. Better or worse? Brittany is the land where the difference between men and women is the greatest, and, as barbarism is never far distant in those primitive countries, it sometimes happens that this feminine mother-of-pearl gives men strange nervous attacks. Young girls have been found assassinated without having been violated. In former days, similar cases of assassinations without motive were committed on young priests; but it is a long time since these acts of madness have been seen.

To this order of ideas must be referred a peculiar trait in the manners of Brittany. I mean the total absence of jewels and even of flowers in the attire of the women. The clergy are opposed to them, and certainly, so far as jewels are concerned, they are quite right.

In the nudity of ancient times, the jewel had a

reason for its existence, and Greece, profiting by certain errors of the Orient, dared to attack this problem, the most delicate of all, of ornamenting by applications upon the living flesh, that masterpiece of nature, the body of a really beautiful woman. But in our cold climates, and with our ideas of Christian modesty, the jewel has no longer any reason for its existence. For my own part, I always feel a sort of antipathy toward these attached ornaments. And what, good God ! have these pendents of savages, these tinsel rags of the Bedouins, to do with the only thing that is of any import—with gentleness and innocence of the glance ? Are virtue and candor expressed by jewels ? Has any jewel ever been invented for the eyes ? There is the odious henna, no doubt ; but has any woman who respects herself ever employed it ? Frightful idea—to paint in black the golden balustrades of the celestial Jerusalem, to soil the borders of the sacred fountain, at the bottom of which we behold God and his paradise. Shall I say it ? Color itself, put at the service of beauty, disturbs and troubles me. Black and white suffice ; better than all adornments they leave room for dreams of the veiled and amorous flesh. Love implies the rule of love ; it assumes candor and modesty in the woman. Herein is contained a certain lie, which nature has willed and which certainly serves her ends.

One of the legends which popular imagination

has grouped around Anne of Brittany expresses well that shade of the feminine charm which has fallen to the lot of our good little race. And what is related of the country of Wales does not discredit the unity of the two populations; the character of *Imogen* in "Cymbeline" is essentially a Breton character. I will go further. The charm of the Englishwoman, at once so chaste and so voluptuous, is in my opinion a Celtic, not an Anglo-Saxon attribute. But, in order to explain this point, I must set forth my ideas as to the ethnography of England, and this is not the place to do so.

It is related, then, that, in one of the interviews which the last and very popular sovereign of Brittany had with Saint Anne, who could refuse her nothing, the Duchess asked from her sainted patroness a special gift for the ladies of her province. The saint granted them chastity, and, since that day, there has existed no example of a Breton dame who has been unfaithful to her duties.

This was, assuredly, a great point gained; nevertheless, the Duchess was not content with it, and asked the saint to add to it beauty. Saint Anne was tolerably embarrassed, and ended by confessing that beauty did not lie in her domain. The Virgin Mary has reserved that for herself. The Queen of Heaven alone disposes of this gift, unique, rare, excellent above all others. Neverthe-

less, in default of beauty, Saint Anne, after reflection, granted this to her god-daughter: that these same dames on whom she could bestow only the gift of chastity, should accomplish with this virtue that which others accomplish with their beauty.

The effects of beauty obtained by the skillfully managed charm of virtue—this is the gift of Saint Anne. According to a hymn of the Middle Ages, attributed to the Abbess Herrade, such is also the taste of Christ. He loves only graceful and modest young girls:

> Pulchras vult virginculas;
> Turpes pellit feminas.*

Turpes here signifies those who are ugly and vulgar in their manners. How has Christianity, always so moral, been thus able to condemn ugliness which, judging from all appearances, is not always voluntary? For a profound reason; it is that a woman who is truly good is never ugly. There is always egotism in ugliness. The worthy person, to whom the gift of the Virgin Mary has not been accorded, can always give herself an equivalent of beauty by her good-humor, her devotion, her kind heart. Charm has no need to justify itself; its triumph is the proof of its legitimacy. I had a cousin, who afterward became the best of

* He desires only fair young maidens; he banishes wicked women.

men, but who in his childhood was a demon, a real Berserker. My sister alone, a very gentle little girl, fifteen years of age, could make him obey. He broke his arm in an attempt to dislodge for her a bird's nest in the roof of a shed ; my sister was obliged to remain for a month by his bedside, in order to make him lie quiet in his apparatus.

It is thus, I repeat, that, with a sober little air, which presented a contrast to her youth, and a slight expression of gentle sadness, little Quéroualle, without being a perfect beauty, bewitched King Charles II., who would look at no one but her in all his brilliant court ; which the Protestants explained by a diabolical science of feminine perversity.

Good Heavens ! The Protestants were not altogether in the wrong in this case, and, if we maintain that chastity is, at bottom, the acme of sensuality, modesty the height of coquetry, I shall not deny it. There are women who are dangerous through their innocence ; it is extremely difficult to distinguish the action of the devil, in such a matter, from that of the good God.

The white God and the black God of the Slavs are not so opposed as these good people imagine. Manichæism is, I think, the only error which I do not profess ; the world is completely one ; everything comes from a single God ; all its dissonances are merged, at a certain height, into a supreme harmony, which is love.

Little Emma Kosilis knew nothing of all this; she went to church very discreetly, with her prayer-book; and the fact is, that toward the age of sixteen or eighteen, without her being any more aware of it than she was of her blooming youth, there was no room in her little soul for anyone except a young man, twenty or two-and-twenty years of age, whom she often saw, and whom I shall call Émilien.

This affair had no beginning. It was a taking possession, which was absolutely unperceived. In these countries of honest morals, the relations between the young people of the two sexes are far freer and more prolonged than in suspicious Paris, which is always inclined to believe evil. My moral education was conducted thus, by several very pure and very pretty female friends of my childhood; to the present day, with good reason, all sweet and kindly things appear to me under the form of a wise little girl of twelve or fourteen, who makes me a discreet sign. I experienced one of my most vivid emotions when, forty years later, one of these friends of my childhood addressed me as: "My dear Ernest."

Emma had been in the habit of seeing Émilien ever since she had had consciousness of herself; she dreamed rather than thought, and so it came to pass that one day, without her having the faintest suspicion in the world of it, Émilien came to occupy the entire cavity of her little heart.

In order that nothing here below may boast of its own merits, the election of love is, like the Divine election, purely gratuitous. It is ignorant of its own motives. The young man whom Emma loved was good-natured and rather weak. But just this simplicity, this absence of all pretension, pleased the young girl. She would not have noticed a superior man, and moreover, the little circle in which she lived would not have furnished her with the opportunity of encountering many such on her path. There was no room in her for anything but that strange, unthinking instinct, which gives no reasons, despises our conventions, and asks absolution of God alone.

I was so vigorously stoned, a year or two ago, for having spoken of love, in this good land of France—of love as something sacred, religious, mystical, that I shall force myself to be brief on this occasion.

Our country, which is indulgent toward blackguardism, makes difficulties about allowing one to speak, in a serious tone, of the deepest secret of nature, of that distant voice of a world which desires to be. People do not see that, by leaving love in the state of nonsense, of turpitude, of coarse jest, they accuse the Eternal of folly. What! The work above all others, the continuance of life, is attached to an act that is ridiculous or coarse. . . . .

For my part, that which seems to demonstrate to

me the divine nature of love, is its spontaneity. It is born like a flower of the fields ; it acts like a loadstone ; the Newtonian attraction is not more subtle than it. Science demonstrates that two molecules, alone in the world, at whatever distance we may assume them to be, would put themselves in motion to meet each other.

Emma's love was of this sort, innocent because it was unconscious. She had a very delicate, very just sense of good and beautiful things. Now a woman does not attach herself to pure abstractions ; she loves good when good is, for her, someone who exists and lives. Covered by the deceptive mantle of an infantile security, Emma's love soon became complete absorption. For whole days she remained motionless, abandoned to a languorous indolence, which she enjoyed in perfect quietude, as one enjoys a warm breeze, without inquiring whence it comes, or a ripe fruit without fearing that the Creator may have concealed a poison in it.

Naturally, she said nothing of her feelings either to the man whom she loved or to her family, or to her companions. Therein lies her fault, if a fault be insisted upon ; we shall see how she was destined to expiate it. The society in which she lived was perfectly honest. Her discretion was so absolute that no one knew anything of the subject which absorbed her. Thus she took delight in her secret for a long time, and certainly, her enjoyment would have been lessened by an avowal.

Her timid bearing rendered easy for her, without the slightest hypocrisy, that air of indifference and premeditated abstraction which is inculcated in young girls. What she felt was so vague, her imagination was so pure, the conversations which she was in the habit of hearing had always been so proper, that the idea never occurred to her that there was anything culpable in what she experienced. Her heart was upright before herself. Any hesitation as to the nature of that which rendered her so happy, and of which she did not know the name, would have been in her eyes as sinful as a blasphemy against God, against the Church, and against its sacraments.

The extreme imprudence of such conduct, excusable only in a child, was soon revealed. While little Emma lived only in her love, Émilien thought of her not at all. He, like everyone else, considered her touching; but he would never have dared to tell her so. He was a mediocre and passive being; he allowed his mother to arrange a marriage for him; and after all was he so much to blame? Emma was so modest that she was not to be distinguished from her friends; one would have said that she sought only to hide herself.

The blow was as sudden as a clap of thunder: one day while she was conversing with her companions, in a little gathering, in the depths of a garden, they discussed various things. The news, fresh that day, was the marriage of Émilien with

Anna M——. It was spoken of as certain. Emma heard all. Such was her command over herself that no one even suspected that a dagger had pierced her heart. She said nothing, rose shortly, and withdrew, without allowing the slightest sign of the terrible wound which she had just received to be perceived.

Another piece of news circulated a few days later in the company of the same young girls, assembled in the same garden. Emma had entered as lay-sister into the community of the Ursuline Dames, in the little town of ——. As Emma was very pious, this surprised no one. Her secret had belonged so exclusively to herself alone that no one connected the two events. The idea never occurred to anyone, that Émilien's marriage was the cause of Emma's entrance into religion. Religious vocations were common among the middle classes of these little towns. Emma's entrance into the community of the Ursuline Dames was regarded as perfectly simple, and did not provoke the faintest accusation of ulterior motive.

The convent of the Ursuline Dames, moreover, admitted of different degrees of religious vocation. By the side of the sisters who were bound to the order by perpetual vows, there were pious persons who wore a costume which recalled that of the order, minus the sacramental veil, and who observed the same practices as the nuns, without assuming any obligations. The majority of these pronounced

their vows at the end of a few years; but there was more than one instance of lay-sisters who had returned to the world after they had passed years in the establishment.

It was to this class of nuns that poor Emma affiliated herself. Everything was commonplace in her admission, in her noviciate, in her conduct at the convent. Tedium is a thing unknown to these races; they dream too much to feel bored. She was a nun of the utmost regularity, pious like the rest, never at fault, esteemed by her superiors. Her face, pale as the white linen which surrounded it, had the ordinary beatific expression common to nuns. Assiduous in prayer and in the exercises of piety, she soon broke herself into the religious habits of the cloister. After the lapse of a few days, the slow and monotonous rocking effect of a religious life had lulled her to sleep, and her ordinary state became a sort of slumber filled with sweetness.

Had she succeeded in chasing from her heart the image which had invaded it completely? By no means; she had not even tried to do this. The suspicion that this thought was sinful never occurred to her for a moment. It was, as in the Song of Solomon, a bouquet of myrrh in her bosom. She would have doubted God sooner than the uprightness of the sentiment which filled her being. In her, love was in the state of a dream, full of sweetness, indefinitely prolonged, of a sweet music

which had but one note. There was neither height nor depth in this state of profound peace. She did not distinguish her love from her piety, or her piety from her love. Her austerities, especially, were permeated by it. She found in it an extreme charm. Feeling, by instinct, that a woman must either enjoy or suffer, she found a sort of voluptuousness in mortifying her flesh. She experienced a deep joy in thinking that she suffered all this for the man whom she loved, and in telling herself that she should never behold any other man than he. Her state of vague love drew from the long psalmodies of the convent a sort of powerful stimulant and augmentation.

There was joined to this a sentiment which I would like to call the pride of reclusion, which is the support of a nun and the cause of her haughtiness. Behind the dreams in which the cloistered woman takes pleasure, there lies the idea that her body is a treasure so precious that bolts and gratings and lofty walls are necessary to place it in security. The severity of the guard adds to the value of the object guarded; a thing which is watched over to this extent must be inestimable. The woman has the sentiment that she pleases by her slightest act; this nearly terrifies her. It is not rare to see extremely beautiful women feel an aversion for going into society. The woman vowed to celibacy also desires, almost always, to be sequestered and veiled. She experiences a sort of

pleasure in proclaiming thus loudly that she is keeping to herself the happiness which she might bestow. Signifying her disdain for men, and reserving herself for the caresses of an invisible and jealous lover, she wishes to be sure that she will be seen only by herself and God.

With these intimate delights there is mingled, in discreet fashion, a confession of weakness which touches all men. It pleases us that a woman should distrust her frailty, that she should take precautions against herself, that she should subject herself to surveillance, and thus implicitly confess that, perhaps, if she were not watched, she might sin. The bold woman, who is sure of herself, of certain modern countries, is antipathetic to us. We love to feel in a woman the embarrassment of her sex, that she is obliged to make an effort to be virtuous, that she is timid, fearful, the vigilant guardian of her treasure.

With simple-minded girls, like Emma's companions, all this was bathed in a mystical pathos of a sufficiently inoffensive nature. With her the case was more complicated. Such was her complete innocence, and the purity of her imagination, that no scruple as to her languors ever occurred to her. She was so certain of being right that she never felt bound to accuse herself of it in confession. Her peace was profound. The efforts usually made by cloistered women to suppress the thoughts which should not come to them, were unknown to

her. Her reclusion was absolute, no man ever came to ask for her in the parlor. The ladies of her family found her so detached from everything that they gradually ceased to visit her.

This lasted for five years, without a trouble, without a storm. Did the possibility of finding Émilien again present itself, at times, to her mind? Did it sometimes occur to her that the woman whom Émilien had married had very feeble health? Since nothing which happened in the little town was unknown in the convent, she was aware that Anna had two little daughters. Did her good heart, masking a little touch of egotism, say to her: You will be their mother some day? Perhaps such thoughts did seek to rise, now and then; but they never acquired a bodily existence in her mind. She was happy and did not desire that her present state should come to an end. She would have remained thus until her death, without a regret, without bitterness; nevertheless, a profound instinct kept her from pronouncing her vows. Her superiors mentioned the subject to her several times; she took refuge in arguments of humility. She was so modest, in fact, that this was considered quite natural on her part.

Now, this possibility which she had never clearly perceived, but which, without her being aware of the fact herself, had been the secret spring of her unconscious life, suddenly became a reality. Anna

M—— had a sister in the house of the Ursulines. One day, according to usage, prayers were asked for the near relative of one of the ladies of the community, who lay in the death-agony. Everything is very soon known in convents. The name of the dying person was mentioned in Emma's presence that evening. The two little girls, who had no longer a mother, were confided to their aunt the nun; Emma could caress them. On the following day, the tolling of the knell from the principal church announced the death of poor Anna. Then came the funeral; Emma followed all the phases of the mass by the ringing of the bell, the Sanctus, the elevation of the host. A service took place at the same hour in the convent. Emma prayed like the others, with so much apparent calm that the angels could not have perceived that she was praying for a rival.

Her trouble had begun, however, and when the cathedral chimes announced that the coffin had been lowered into the grave, she found herself in a state with which she was unacquainted. She did not recover herself; she could hardly pray; she tried to put on her hair shirt, and found it unsupportable; the austerities which were familiar to her disgusted her. She deprived herself of the communion for a week, her peace was at an end, her piety deeply shaken. At certain hours, she believed herself to be an egoist, almost malicious. There was no recourse to God; she asked herself

if she was in a state of grace: the Church no longer possessed any consolations for her; the long, tranquil meditations which had constituted her delight, were interrupted by perpetual distractions, which she could not banish.

This was the only dangerous moment in her life. There was one month when she came near going to destruction. Assuredly, had not the issue been that which I am about to relate, she would have rebelled. She might, perhaps, have remained in the convent; but she would have been a bad nun, that is to say, the very worst, and the most unhappy thing in this world. Her chains, which had been so sweet to her when enjoyment had been impossible, and while her hope had been lost, had become intolerable to her. The beloved image, which had slumbered at the bottom of her heart for years, now rendered her distracted, agitated her mortally.

This time, she thought herself obliged to tell everything to her confessor, who was the chaplain of the convent. He was a man of narrow mind, but very sensible. At first, he wished to wait: then he saw the gravity of the evil. After all, Emma had taken no vow, she had not worn the costume of the order, the fillet had not pressed her brow. The chaplain was kind of heart. The secret of the confessional prevented his consulting his bishop. He formed his opinion by his own reason. Convinced that the salvation of his

spiritual daughter was at stake, a thoroughly paternal thought occurred to him. He had Anna's daughters confided to Emma's personal care. He hoped, in this manner, to furnish employment to the uneasiness which had begun to take possession of her and to pour out upon these orphans the overfullness of her heart. In case the union of Emma and Émilien should become necessary, he intended to arrange matters so that it might be said that everything had been done at the instance of Émilien, "desirous of procuring a second mother for his children." He hoped that, in this way, an exposure, a scandal, they termed it, might be avoided.

The father came to see his little girls, and Emma led them to the parlor. The blow was terrible; she burst into tears. Émilien had changed very little, he was such as she had continued to behold him in her dreams during the last five years. As for her, her body was completely emaciated. The torrent of tears which inundated her, in spite of herself, weakened her; in an instinctive movement of her eyes, thus bathed in tears, Émilien read her love.

This man, of an ordinary mind, but really good, was then able to understand it all. A flash of lightning traversed his mind, he combined matters instantaneously. As he had a very tender heart, he was deeply touched. The sight of his little girls, whom he loved greatly, in the arms of this

excellent woman, moved him to the very depths of his being. A respectful love took possession of him. The pious memory of Anna which he preserved was merged into this new sentiment; he had never read a romance, he was a stranger to all literature, the unprecedented favor which Heaven had sent to him did not inspire him for a moment with fatuity.

Some months later Emma and Émilien were united in marriage. That which no one had ever seen, everyone beheld. It was the entire country which married them. Emma was much beloved for her goodness. Public opinion, ordinarily unfavorable to nuns who leave their convent, was very indulgent to her. By means of little artifices of coiffure, which were not lacking in grace, they concealed her hair, which had fallen under the scissors of the convent; her bosom, compressed by austerities, dilated; she resumed her four-and-twenty years. People were enchanted to see her once more; they had thought her buried forever.

My sister considered that the joy experienced by this heroine of faithful love was the greatest that ever the heart of woman felt. Her passion, silent for the space of five years, and doubled by suffering, had become a part of her being. The rest of her life, there was never the least diminution in her love, that is to say, in her happiness. The state in which she had been during the five years that she had passed in the convent, and

which was so violently disturbed by the knell announcing the death of her rival, lasted the whole time, without a single cloud.

Her husband, sustained by so marvelous a proof of fidelity, was constantly under the impression of a tender and passionate sentiment. The law of their union was that which was on the wedding-ring of Saint Louis:

"Outside this ring can there be love?"

Émilien, in spite of his mediocrity, was conscious of the incomparable treasure which Heaven had bestowed upon him. His love became a sort of religious worship. The trial had been unique, superhuman. This iron resolution: "No one shall see me except he," proved by the most incontrovertible facts, though far surpassing the capacity of his own nature, astonished him, conquered him, inspired him with a sort of fear, like something mysterious.

With her, that which dominated all else was the sentiment of an enormous triumph. "I have conquered," was the thought which ruled her life. The memory of the Ursuline convent always remained dear to her. She returned thither every year, to spend a few days. Her piety was not founded on reasoning, and was, therefore, not very aggressive. She wished to preserve her conventual costume in a wardrobe. In her bedroom, her nun's scourge was suspended on a nail; she often reminded her husband of what she had suf-

fered for him, and how, for five years, she had combated her flesh to preserve her love ; with his permission, she wore her haircloth garment on certain days. Thus she enjoyed, without a moment's intermittance, the most perfect felicity that can be imagined. She had risked much. All the chances had been that the cloister would wear her out, that Anna would survive her. That had not stopped her. The voluptuousness, which had been repressed for five years, flowed freely. For twenty-five years she floated on a Pacific Ocean of happiness and love.

They had eight children, from whom they never separated the two daughters of poor Anna. They reared them well ; their sons were very honest fellows. As neither of them had any intellectual cleverness, not the slightest literary subtlety, not the slightest mental reservation ever attacked their sincerity. People never read anything, happily, in these remote districts ; the literary malady, that moral phylloxera of our day, has not penetrated thither. Love was all the time like a powerful dose of idealistic morphine injected beneath their flesh.

They lived an extremely retired life, in the depths of a somber manor, situated in a valley near the sea, in the middle of a dense forest of beeches. These manors, if one confine one's self to the exterior, have the air of sepulchers ; one would pronounce them the strongholds of despair. Beware ! inside they are full of sweet familiarities,

of amiable privacies. The little gardens, cut by walls which surround them, are the image of the intimate life that is led there. The pond which feeds the feudal mill causes a certain shudder, at first; then you acquire a love for the intense verdure of its osier beds, its surface concealed beneath water-lilies.

It was in one of these nests of verdure, closed in on every side, and bathed in shade, that Emma and Émilien passed their life. At the end of a few years, people forgot their history. Hardly anyone knew them. Great love loves solitude; it needs no one. Emma's life in this desert was that of paradise, an infinite enjoyment, without oscillation or slackening. People talk of the storms of love. What childishness! Love has its inequalities: but voluptuousness has no storms. Emma's happiness, after her victory, was like the high seas, without ebb or flood, whereon she floated wrapped in a slumber. Death itself hardly existed for her. Life left her because the hour had come to finish it. She died at the age of fifty, without any malady. These great and durable joys vanish without causing any bitterness. To St. Augustine is attributed this saying as to the happiness of the elect: *Quod habent desiderant*—"They desire that which they have." It is very well said; but we must remember that this acme of bliss is conquered only by an excess of heroic will, exercised for a very long time.

My sister, in narrating to me this story, discovered in it a perfect example of love, as she understood it. She esteemed Émilien the happiest of men, he for whose sake an excellent woman had condemned herself to a life of austerity, thus giving him the absolute guarantee of her exclusive love. In the space of five years, she had never beheld a single man. She had accepted loyally the chances of an eternal seclusion. As in all battles, life was at stake here. There is no recompense except for those who dare. Happiness is like glory; in order to win it one must play for large stakes.

One day I ventured to remark to my sister that this was a great deal of devotion to bestow on a mediocre man. "Oh! what matters it?" she replied. "He certainly did not merit so much happiness; but who does merit the happiness that he has? These are the false ideas of your Parisian literary men, who imagine that great men alone are worthy of love. What childishness! You will perceive the absurdity of all that one of these days. Ah! the heroes who have saved their country, I can conceive of it for them; but the daubers of canvas, the smudgers of paper, what is there in that for the heart? What are your puerile literary celebrities for love?" She often recurred to this point. She was much opposed to the foolish admiration of fame, which is one of the absurdities of our time, and thought it ridiculous

that a woman should set any store by reputation, for her husband. She, who was so little given to mockery, rallied wittily those women who seek the men who pretend to superiority. She would have none of those husbands who belong to everybody. She thought that the woman who marries a celebrated man is only half a wife, the public entering more or less into their union as a third party. It is certain that the *dilectus meus mihi et ego illi*—my beloved is mine and I am his—of the Song of Solomon, would have had no meaning if the shepherd of Sulem had been a well-known personage, delivered over to be pastured on by the public, and interviewed every morning by journalists.

How I should like to have someone write thus a "Morality in Action" of virtuous love, where should be recounted, in simple style, heroic instances, like that of Emma! The "Morality in Action" was the book which had the most influence over me in my childhood, after "Télémaque," however. They say that these sorts of books are out of fashion now; so much the worse for fashion. I imagine that the great success of the century would be a book which should depict for us men such as they ought to be; we have but too many occasions to see them as they are.

Certainly, a distinction must be made between what we propose to imitate and what we propose to admire. The examples for imitation should always have something mediocre and plebeian

about them, since practice is plebeian. But in order to obtain from men their simple duty, they must be shown the example of those who exceed it. Morals are maintained by heroes. Feminine virtue is one of the providential elements in the edifice of the world. The woman has charge of good. The true does not concern her in the least, but the proof of morals lies much more in the eyes of the honest young girl than in the reasoning of a metaphysician.

This is what always impels me, in my moments of leisure, to meditate upon the most sacred of the acts of life; this is what makes me find so much pleasure in those grand examples of noble love, where love and duty are opposed one to the other, and where they grow reciprocally. The profanation which is made of love in the superficial literature of Paris is the disgrace of our times. That is the crime against the Holy Spirit, for which, according to the Gospel, there is no forgiveness. The sacred wafer is dragged through the mud, the great educating force of the human race is misunderstood. Love does not possess its full value, except under the restrictions of duty. There is no part of life which imposes more obligations, nor which is subjected to more complicated rules.

Restricted ideas must correspond to restricted duties. The faith of woman is a virtue; it must be respected, like all other feminine virtues. People will be mistaken if they think that we desire to

lead women to our philosophical opinions. Often, on the contrary, we are very glad that they do not listen to us. We love their decided intention not to hear what will enfeeble their heroic resolution. It is sufficient, if we may suppose that, by a little dissimulation, they agree with us at bottom.

Woman often pleases us precisely because she resists us; we are grateful to her for her refusal. The woman who resembles us is antipathetic to us. What we seek in the other sex is the contrary of ourselves. Weakness, false reasoning, narrow ideas, ignorance, superstition, shock us in a man, and often cause us to smile in a woman. We love the sign of the cross executed with a graceful feminine gesture. It does not displease us to see our virile works insulted, misunderstood by women; their indignation enchants us, for we descry the delicate sentiment where their scorn has its origin, and that troubles us but little, since, through science, we are sure of being in the right.

I envy my eminent colleague, Mr. Brown-Séquard, for what happened to him at one of his learned lessons. An anti-vivisectionist lady, placed near him, gave him a blow with her umbrella. *Telum imbelle!*—an unwarlike weapon. This excellent person certainly made a mistake; vivisection, with the humane cares by which it is surrounded, representing the decillionth part of that which animals suffer, is a very inoffensive thing, but errors of the heart please us in women. The wrath which

our legitimate liberties cause them proves that to which we cling the most strongly in them; their virtue—an essential condition of their charm and of the absolute dissonance which we desire between them and us. We love feminine absurdity, while still not wishing that it should govern the world and make the law too much therein.

However, God's will be done in everything! The world is good as it is; I should be desperately sorry to have contributed in any way to diminish piety in women. *Pietas*, in its finest Latin sense, implying feebleness and tenderness, is the excellent gift that has been conferred upon them. During my last journey to Brittany, I was happy to see that the young girls were as pretty, as modest, as well-brought up as they were fifty years ago. My sole desire is that it may continue so. I should be consoled if I could know, after my death, that women are still as pretty, and that love is still as sweet as in the past.

In order to save the possibility of a future beyond the grave, many lofty minds dream of a series of new births, with profound modifications of our being. This order of ideas is not that in which I take pleasure; metempsychosis is the idea which has always had the fewest attractions for me. Nevertheless, if anything in the nature of these dreams were conceivable, I should request, as the recompense for my head work, to be born again a woman, in order that I might study the two fash-

ions of living which the Creator has instituted, so that I might comprehend the two poetries of the thing. I really have reasoned and combined a good deal in that manner. I should like, in another world, to speak to the feminine element, with the voice of a woman, to think as a woman, to love as a woman, to pray as a woman, to see how women reason. From that world, I desire to assure you, dear sisters, that I have never cherished for you a single evil sentiment, that your piety has even frequently been one of the causes of my inward joy. And beholding it so assured, I have said to myself that my ideas, in so far as they might be dangerous, would speedily find their counterpoise, and that, consequently, I can freely accord them their flight.

SUPPLEMENT TO PAGE 119 OF "SOUVENIRS D'ENFANCE."

THE approach of old age having led me, several years ago, to choose a sojourn for the summer in the vicinity of the spot where my childhood was passed, I desired to behold once more the cemetery of —— where, according to certain inductions, I knew that little Noémi, the friend of my youth, must be buried. Alas! I did not find her name there. A gravestone had been, evidently, too costly a luxury for her; she had only a wooden cross.

Now, a wooden cross speedily falls to pieces: the transverse strip which bears the name of the deceased becomes loosened first, and the dead, whose memory is preserved only by this fragile sign, soon have no further existence, except in the memory of God.

That memory, being the very reality of things, is truly the only one which counts. The memory of men is not only brief but it is inexactness itself. I have the honor to be a member of the commission on the Literary History of France, at the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres. If people only knew the expungement of errors which we effect at each of our sessions, everyone would become incredulous as to what is said and what is related. The Last Judgment, supposing that the Eternal gives an opportunity for the interrogation of witnesses, will be a tissue of iniquities. A certain incident opened my eyes to this incurable weakness of human opinions, on one frightful day.

Having asked some information from a person whom I knew to be well posted as to my little companion, this was the reply which I received: "Yes, she was very pretty, but she turned out badly. Do not look for her here. She followed such and such a person . . . he seduced her, then abandoned her. She came to her end on the pavements of Paris." The person whom I interrogated added various very precise circumstances, which seemed to leave no doubt as to the truth of her assertions.

The horror of a priest who should behold his holy sacrament fall into the mud would be nothing compared to the feeling which I experienced at that moment. The thought that my little friend, who had opened to me the paradise of the ideal, when I was twelve years of age, could have been defiled to that extent, filled me with indignation. That which my mother had related to me concerning her pious death still rang in my ears. I made no reply to my interlocutor; but I seated myself under an aged beech, at the corner of the cemetery facing the sea; I gathered my memories together; soon the truth appeared to me, sovereign, evident, with no admixture of conjecture. By dint of placing side by side certain particulars of the conversation which had just taken place, I beheld a misunderstanding, plain as the daylight, rise before me.

Noémi had, in fact, a little friend who often played with us and who resembled her by her beauty—a beauty which came to her from the devil in as direct a line as Noémi's came to her from God. I shall call her Nera. Although the daughter of a very chaste mother, Nera had, even in her childhood, the manners of a loose woman. She lost her mother early; my grandmother took charge of her; but, wholly absorbed in her devotion, she was extremely weak where Nera was concerned. She did not perceive her bad conduct, and, when my sister Henriette went to pass a few

weeks with her grandmother, of whom she was very fond, she felt a constant anguish of heart. Nera rendered her unhappy, mocked at her seriousness, and gave her to understand that, being less pretty than herself, she was fit only to serve her. My sister, who was excessively delicate, suffered and said nothing. One evening, on her return from church, in the depths of a dark corridor which led to the apartment occupied by my grandmother, she received a kiss which was not intended for her, and shrieked loudly. At last poor Nera turned out in the saddest possible way. One day, Henriette and I received a visit from her, in the Rue Val-de-Grâce. Although greatly abased, she had an air of hatred. Henriette forgot her repugnance, and did all that was possible to save her. But her kindness only irritated the unhappy girl. Behind the benefactress she perceived the little girl whose virtue she had teased. To owe everything to her laughing-stock of former days seemed to her worse than hunger. After a while she changed her address, and we completely lost sight of her.

For indubitable reasons, which left no room for hesitation, I finally perceived that a horrible confusion had been established, and that, in the minds of the three or four persons who may still have some lights on this past, the memory of Nera has been substituted for that of Noémi. A blunder has charged a virtuous person with the record of a fallen woman. To tell the truth, this is of no great

consequence: in a few years the three or four persons who remember Noémi, and I along with them, will have disappeared, and all this will be buried in oblivion, that hideous monster which daily devours —O Heavens, many another error!

But I make a point of protesting, out of pure love for the truth.

I swear before God, in the name of my firmest and most precise recollections, in the name of facts and reasons which furnish me with absolute certitude, that an error has been committed, that my mother's version is the true one, that my little friend died solely because nature committed a mistake, having made her at once beautiful, poor, and discreet. As I have said, she died of virtue. People saw her go to church to say her prayers; but all ended there. Now it lay in her race to be a faithful wife and an excellent mother, or to die. It was Nera who lent an ear to bad counsels and followed the path of folly. I adjure the Eternal to be on his guard against this confusion, if it should attempt to pass into the great book which, it is said, will be produced on the Day of Judgment. I will rise, if need be, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, to protest against such a monstrosity. I wish that my little companion should be in heaven. It is unnecessary to say, of course, that I shall offer no opposition if the Eternal, in his infinite indulgence, sees fit to pardon poor Nera.

THE DOUBLE PRAYER.

ONE of the finest religious spectacles which can be contemplated in our day, is that which the ancient cathedral of Quimper presents at nightfall. When the shadows have filled the side aisles of the vast edifice, the faithful of both sexes join each other in the nave, and chant the evening prayer in the Breton tongue, to a simple and touching rhythm. The cathedral is lighted only by two or three lamps; on one side of the nave are the men, standing, on the other the kneeling women form a motionless sea of white coifs. The two halves sing alternately, aud the phrase begun by one of the choirs is completed by the other.

That which they sing is very beautiful; when I heard it, it seemed to me that, with a few small transpositions, it might be accommodated to all states of humanity. Above all, it made me dream of a prayer which, by means of slight variations, might suit men and women equally.

Humanity, in effect, by its division into two sexes, is a choir, where the two sides respond. An attempt to unite the prayers of the men and the women was one of the most successful undertakings of budding Christianity. The Middle Ages also excelled in this sometimes; witness that English abbey, of which my learned brother M. Haureau has spoken.*

* Histoire "Littéraire de la France," t. xxvii, p. 32.

The abbey was double, that is to say, composed of a convent for men and a convent for women, who united in the same church for the canonical hours. A wall divided the choir throughout the entire length, and was sufficiently high to prevent the monks and nuns from seeing each other, but not sufficiently so as to prevent their voices from mingling. *Murus corpora non voces disjungit*—The wall separated their bodies, not their voices. The song which rises from humanity to the Eternal, to be complete, should be thus double.

The world will be saved only when men and women shall pray together the same prayer, with the difference of tones which befits them.

Distinct on the level of the earth, the prayers should mingle at a certain altitude before mounting together to Heaven. Thus the discordant sounds of earth, at a certain height, are merged into perfect accord. I am astonished that no theologian should have maintained that the prayers of men and the prayers of women are of a different quality. The two incenses, borne by the angels before the throne of the Eternal, would compose, as they burned, the perfect incense.

This is what I believed that I heard in the chants of the cathedral of Quimper, all sectarian dissent, and all attachment to a particular dogma, being set aside :

CHORUS OF MEN.

My God, I believe firmly in Thy power which fills the world, draws life from inert masses, force from fragile tissues, genius from a brain which will be dust to-morrow. We adore Thee above all in our breast. We never faint, and when our breath begins to weaken, we feel Thy presence by the powerful return of strength which rises to our hearts.

The work of genius is Thy work. The labor is ours. Long live labor when we toil for the universe and for humanity! It pleases us to be the victims of a fine work, which Thou wilt still further perfect. Assuredly, Thou doest something, and Thou doest it through us. We are sure that the laborer for humanity will one day receive his recompense.

Our arms have become heavy with the heat of the day. Why are the

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

My God, I believe firmly in Thy goodness, which causes our heart to beat, overflows in our milk, fills our breasts, nourishes our little ones, causes the tranquil languor of our eyes, feeds our tenderness, sustains our piety. We are sure that Thy spirit is in us, when our breasts swell; the palpitation of our bosoms is Thy voice.

Praised be Thy universe! It is good, luminous, and great. Thou hast willed that Thy justice should be veiled like us. Be praised. Justice is more difficult to realize than goodness, we feel it. On this point we resign ourselves to wait. We give Thee centuries to perfect Thy work. Count on us.

Our maternal cares have been heavy to-day. Grant us strength to be

burdens for us, the enenjoyments for others? We have committed no sin; and we dare not say that Thy power is limited. If there was before Thee a god of evil, Thou wouldst have annihilated him long ago.

Grant us the strength to conquer our wrath. When we abandon ourselves to our frivolous thoughts, we are irritated at the happiness of the wicked, at the prosperity of the unjust. In Thy light all is explained to us. The liberty of beings demands that Thou shouldst abandon them to their inequality. Oh, how dear is the cost of liberty. Blessed be Thou, nevertheless, for having given it to us.

Console us poor victims; a God is made of our tears. The wicked are necessary. Our poverty is the proof resigned. Thou lovest us, yea, Thou lovest us; for Thou hast need of us. Thy aim is life. We are the instruments in Thy hand, for the most beautiful of Thy works. Wilt Thou not have pity one day upon Thy poor toiler in bringing forth life?

Our trials are sometimes severe. Long are our fevers when one of Thy little creatures is suspended in our bosom, by long threads of silk. The recompense of our virtue is poverty. Our repose is the tomb. Our milk is for little children decked out like idols, who are not our own. Our heart swells with indignation at times; but Thou calmest us; Thou art the only consoler. Peace, happiness, repose, will never exist, save at Thy feet.

Yea, an hour passed with Thee gives us peace. Here Thou communicatest to us Thy secrets. Thou

that we have never done any evil. The wicked man cannot be an hour alone with himself. Our Father who art in heaven, we are with Thee every hour, for Thou art in our heart above all.

The triumph of evil shall never shake us. We will always admit duties which reach unto death. Oh, great country of souls, Thou hast a right to all sacrifices. Yes, death, if it presents itself in Thy name, will be as gladly welcomed by us as life. When one knows Thee, an hour of life is a blessing. Every creature who is conscious of its own existence and of Thy existence should return thanks and die blessing Thee.

The courage which was in the heart of our fathers is in our heart. It is the coward who does not believe in Thee. When one has lived, one lives always ; an eternal solacest us, Thou makest us proud of our poverty. Surely, the wicked man is punished, for he cannot converse with Thee. Thanks for the lot that has been assigned to us. Thou has willed the world—the world is made of our tears.

Yea, O God, we will be faithful. Do what Thou wilt, we will never doubt Thee. We defy Thee, beloved God ! It shall be a battle between us ! Thou shalt not conquer. Demand, demand ever, we will always give. Our heart is ready. Strike, make Thy hand heavier yet ; it shall always be gentle to us.

Come, abuse our patience, try of what we are capable. We will endure every test. Thou hast need of our devotion, we know it. Thou canst not keep Thy uni-

mark has been traced in the infinite. Whether this furrow be long or short, what is it in comparison with Thy eternity? Thou rememberest us; hence we are immortal.

The goal attained wilt Thou restore life to those who have contributed to the victory of the good and the true? Thou alone knowest: we must not know it. Is it not enough that we should live in Thy memory? Assuredly, we would wish to learn the issue of the battle which we are fighting with Thee. Be the conqueror, O God! that is the essential point. We shall triumph in Thee.

Thy rule has been to create reason by obscure aspirations for existence, to create giants verse in motion without us. Behold Thy poor handmaidens on their knees. Continue to demand from us much, as much as thou wilt. It is so sweet to be a victim! Thanks, O Heaven, for our weakness! Thanks, for the confidence Thou hast in our powers of suffering!

As Thou givest us life, so we love Thee. Yes, we should like to live, to be beautiful forever. O Father, pardon the blindness of Thy poor handmaidens. Thy gifts are so excellent that we would wish them to be eternal. Foolish creatures that we are. Let us reflect on what we are asking: eyes which preserve their charm indefinitely, hair which never turns white, lips fresh through a thousand years. O Father, pardon our childish egotism!

The beauty which Thou givest us at certain hours, and during a few years, is a fragile

with decillions of microbes, to make something coherent of gnats. Thy means are humble; Thy results attain to the infinite. The earth weighed, the heavens measured, the atom described, what marvels. When the plant-louse has finished its work, dost Thou preserve it for eternity? It would be a great honor to Thee to show it. It is more probable that it goes to take its place among the myriads of its congeners which pave the infinite.

We are making, stitch by stitch, a tapestry of which we do not see the pattern. Let us accept the salary of good workmen and spend it in peace.

We thank Thee for the life that has been given us, and we do not fear death, since we are delivered from the frightful thought that after having so tried thing. Truly, we cannot regret it. That which passes away is not, for that reason, frivolous. What difference will there be a century hence, between those who are beautiful to-day, and those who have been beautiful? Others will then be beautiful, and they will pass in their turn. Of what has the flower to complain? Thou alone art always the same, and Thy years know no decline.

Subordinated to Thy ends, we shall always be good, docile, and submissive. We will love men and we will serve them. We will banish from their minds sad thoughts, at need, we will talk nonsense to them.

Kneeling before Thy goodness, we shall always be Thy obedient daughters. What Thy designs exact, we will accomplish, with a humble heart. We abdicate

us in life, Thou wilt pass Thy eternity in torturing us. The future will behold better days than ours; as, in our age, we have been more favored than our fathers were. But each one of us is inseparable from the state of the universe, at the moment when he made his appearance. Happy is he, who, in the final review, shall find himself on the side of those who have fought for the true and the good!

forever every virile thought. Knowing that that which pleases in us is Thyself, our only thought shall be to please Thee. We will cultivate our beauty, which exists by Thy will; and, associating it indissolubly with the idea of virtue, we will assure the triumph of good by the charm which is exhaled from us.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE STATUE OF BRIZEUX AT LORIENT, SEPTEMBER 9, 1888.

YOUR festival is really charming, gentlemen. You have had a happy inspiration. You have desired that one of your most dainty poets should not be left without a memorial in his native town. A simple, elegant monument, in the best taste, will recall to you, every day, this tender soul, this excellent man, who was born and grew up among you, and who, better than anyone else, has revealed to the

world the dearest thoughts, the most secret recesses of the conscience of your race, the deepest secrets of your manner of feeling. His life, which was modest and poorly recompensed, certainly had a right to this reparation. Brittany was behindhand with Brizeux. Thanks to you, this appearance of ingratitude is effaced. He who said: "And I have not even an assured retreat," now has his pedestal of granite, whence he invites us to contemplate with him the sea, the sky, the infinite; the mysteries of the soul, which are never to be exhausted.

It has been said that Brizeux discovered Brittany. That is saying too much, perhaps. But he certainly did discover one charming thing, among others—M. Le Braz expressed it finely the other day, in his lecture at Lannion—he discovered Breton love—love, discreet, tender, profound, faithful, with its faint tinge of mysticism. Two children who seek to be for hours together without exchanging a word; a pretty, rosy face, very modest, under a white coif, nothing more, that suffices! Adorable simplicity of means! Oh! how far removed we are with him from that twaddle, from those perverse ingredients which certain schools think themselves obliged to mix with the divine ambrosia of love! No jewels, no adornments; hardly flowers; color itself rendered useless, white and black sufficing to set off the freshness of a virginal complexion.

Shall I say it, in eulogy of this excellent artist? He hardly needs beauty. Candor and innocence are enough.

"I have seen Marie," said a friend of Brizeux, a friend of his earliest years; "she was not precisely pretty; but there was a singular grace about her." Eh! What more is required? The effects of beauty obtained by charm, that is the triumph of Breton æsthetics, that is the art of Brizeux: an exquisite art, always healthy, always noble, which was never troubled in its limpidity by any literary malady, by any of those ugly stains which soil the purest works of our day.

His poetry was simple because it was true. He loved life, with that which rendered it supportable, the taste for good under all forms. He was not of those who boast of having slain sleep. In order to sleep, he had no need of those narcotics which enervate more than sleeplessness. In order to sleep, he needed only the shadow of an oak tree on that land "where one can live and die alone." He had his doubts, sometimes; his papers, scrutinized after his death by discreet friends, bear witness to this; he condemned the sheets which contained them to remain unpublished. This touching verse is very like him:

All shall hear my voice, none shall behold my tears.

Poetry and love, those voices from another world, never abandoned him. Others culled the

flowers of evil; he loved only the flowers of good, that which elevates, that which consoles this poor humanity, but too much inclined to calumniate itself. His ideal is a temple open to all, and from which shall be excluded only "the coward and the wicked man."

This faith in good preserved him from the great modern errors, nihilism and pessimism. These are not precisely the maladies of our race. The portion of robust faith which is our heritage, even reduced to clouds, sustains us. We have exhausted nothing; for we never drain the cup to its dregs. That is why we are fresh for life when so many others are weary of living. We are not obliged to convert ourselves in order to pass to modern ideas. We transfer to them our religious sincerity, our fidelity, and, above all, that of which this century stands most in need, our good sense, our honesty.

When one is sure of being in the right, one is gentle toward injustice. Times were very, very hard for Brizeux. The provincial items were not accorded, in his day, so large a freedom of the city as at present, in the general literature of France. Timid, like all Bretons, Brizeux sought to inaugurate something which had not yet a place in the official sunshine. He was little understood. He desired to belong to the Academy, and the Academy committed the error of not electing him. He always remained poor; but he sang to the very

end. The confidant of his last hours, M. Saint-René Taillandier, has related how he died with the assurance of a great heart, content with his work, and proclaiming loudly his aversion for pharasaisms, for all hypocrisies.

You have, indeed, done well, gentlemen, to crown with public honors this life which was so disinterested, so lofty, so pure! This beautiful place, filled with the memory of Brizeux, will be for our city a place of meditation, a spot wherein to dream—the best thing in the world—an oasis in the harsh desert of modern life. The positive cares of our times render poetry only the more necessary. It is, with religion included as a matter of course, the balm which softens and consoles, the voice which says within us: *Sursum corda!*—Lift up your hearts! Here it will have a place that is, in a manner, consecrated. A visit to this pretty square will be the goal of pilgrimages, whither people will come to seek repose in the heat of the day. The statue of Brizeux will be for you a sanctuary, a signal of recall to the things of the heart and of the spirit. You will love this place, and every time that you pass before this noble image, you will think of the poet who has put your soul into his verses, you will thank the excellent sculptor who has given you such a perfect image of Brizeux.

LOVE AND RELIGION.

[Letter to M. Périvier, editor of The Literary Supplement of "Figaro."]

PERROS-GUIREC, August 4, 1888.

Dear Sir: You insist on having my opinion upon the charming competition which you have thrown open to your lady readers on this question: "Which book has spoken most delicately and most eloquently of love?" You inform me that a great number of your subscribers seem to have agreed to reply: "The Bible, the Gospels, the Imitation," and you ask me what I think of this combination. Scoffers will, perhaps, perceive in it a refinement of hypocrisy, as though your correspondents had wished to prove thereby that they read no other books. This objection would have but little effect on me; for I confess that I love the women whose mass-book constitutes their whole literature, provided that, in addition, they be good or beautiful; but let us leave epigrams out of the discussion; I will examine the question, since you desire it, with all the impartiality of a conscientious juror.

I think that the clever readers who have replied thus to your question have replied well. In their determination to cite only religious books, there lies a great truth—it is the fundamental identity of religion and love. Yes, the Bible and the Gospels, wonderful books in so many respects, are particularly

remarkable from the manner in which the relations of the sexes are handled in them. The life of the great evangelical charmer is, at every step, a box on the ear administered to pharisees, either of the libertine camp or the rigorist camp. The rôle of Mary of Magdala, in the formation of the belief in the resurrection, is the acme and really the miracle of love.

In that great compilation which is called the Bible, we make distinctions which your charming subscribers are quite right in ignoring. The delicious idyls, which will always maintain the Bible in an incomparable rank among books, are found in those portions of the ancient recitals which proceed from a certain narrator, who is almost always easily to be recognized. He is the author of the beautiful pages in Genesis, wherein is depicted the grandiose Jehovah who creates the world, then repents; who perceives plainly that the sole means to reform humanity is to destroy it, and who, nevertheless, after his failure in the matter of the Deluge, resolves to allow it to follow its own course in the future. This pessimist of genius, the inventor of original sin, is especially admirable in everything which concerns woman's part in human affairs. When he attacks this subject, he is profound, tender, mysterious. His terrible giant of a Jehovah occupies himself with marriages, interests himself in lovers. It is to this philosopher, gloomy as Schopenhauer or M. Hartmann, that we are

indebted for the patriarchal idyls of Isaac and Rebecca, of Jacob and Rachel. It is he who shows us, in the dim distance, the sons of God perceiving that the daughters of men were fair, and quite at the beginning of things, it is he who relates to us how the woman was drawn from the side of the man—the most beautiful myth which exists in any religion; the primitive nudity, at which the inhabitants of Eden did not blush; the modesty which is born with sin, the broad leaves of the Indian fig tree serving to veil their first shame; then that garment of skins in which Jehovah, a costumer of the Michael Angelo pattern, clothes the exiles with his own hands.

The book of Ruth is of the same school. No one is so tender as the austere man. All these old fables are marvels of grandeur, of sober and firm design, without any of those literary reticences which spoil everything. For my part, I cannot read it without tears. And certainly, I am also very fond of that touching anonymous person, that old monk arrived at the perfection of wisdom, who wrote in the "Imitation" the perfect rule of love: *Ama nesciri*—Love to be ignorant.

If I had taken part in your competition, descending to more human regions without emerging from mysticism, I might, perhaps, have added to these almost divine books, several grand works of Christian genius; for example, the "Confessions of Saint Augustine," the "Introduction to the Life of

Devotion," of St. François de Sales. What enchanting books! Especially the "Introduction!" I have it not at hand here. But I recall the chapter on the love of wedded pairs as one of the most charming pages in existence. The holy bishop has a peculiar system for conjugal love; he thinks that, marriage being in itself a heavy, disagreeable thing, filled with duties—in short a purgatory—the Eternal in his infinite goodness has added to it a special sweetness, which one may enjoy with all quietness of conscience, since it is the compensation for a chain which is otherwise extremely unpleasant.

Thus Abimelech, King of Gerar, receiving in his states Isaac and Rebecca, "the chastest married pair in all the Old Testament," who gave themselves out as brother and sister, speedily recognized the fact that they were something quite different. As he walked in the evening through the streets of Gerar, he divined the truth, from the manner in which they smiled at each other. The commentary of François de Sales on this narrative is a masterpiece of delicacy and worldly irony, relieved by extreme goodness. Nevertheless, is the reasoning of the sainted bishop very conclusive, and is the compensatory plan of the Eternal as evident as he thinks? We may certainly dispute this. For, in short, if pleasure had not been devised by God to render marriage endurable, we must conclude that it does not exist outside of

marriage. Now, the holy bishop does not dare go so far as that, and it appears, from this point on, that his theory as to the secret designs which God may have had when he invented love, is weak at the very foundation.

There is also, perhaps, something defective through irony, in the manner in which François de Sales, in this same chapter, desires that one should treat old married people. According to him they must be regarded as ripe fruits. If they possess no defect, no spot which arouses a fear lest they may spoil, one may preserve them all winter; and to that end, the best means is to bind them up in the very leaves which clustered about them in their freshness. These leaves constitute a little environment for them; a society, habits, wherein they believe that they still live. But if they have some blemish, some principle of corruption, they are fit only to be made into preserve. The preserve, naturally, is devotion, which preserves them and furnishes them with sugar which they would not, perhaps, any longer retain otherwise.

I give this recipe of the good Bishop of Annecy for what it is worth. It is not for the sake of that page that I would have presented it to the competition. But it is certain, that the tone which he maintains with his Philothea is that of an exquisite man. He was very fond of women, and put them to marvelous profit, because he always imposed upon himself the absolute rule of his profession.

He admits the possibility of tender collaboration and of very intimate relations between man and woman, to the advantage of a work beloved in common. This is one of the secrets of the Church of Jesus, and therein lies the explanation of the sentiment which women, in certain countries, often cherish for priests. They find them superior to their husbands, and, as the sarcedotal vow inspires them with a sort of security, they give themselves up, without qualms, to a sentiment which they would combat under any other circumstances.

Award then, without hesitation, the prize to those of your competitors who have voted for the sacred books. They have perfectly understood, in the first place, that the good manner of speaking of love is to place the essence and perfume of it everywhere, not to talk of it directly and in a doctrinal tone ; next, that the mystics, or, in other words, those who have made the least misuse of love are those who can speak of it the best.

Give as prize to these grave readers a copy of the "Introduction to the Life of Devotion," in the edition of M. de Sacy, published by Techener, with Jansenist binding. What an enviable privilege is that of these ancient books, which have the right to be read in church by pious women, at the moment when, with eyes down-dropped, without distractions, they hold all their thoughts concentrated before God, having nothing in their hearts save what is tender, amiable, and good ! I often

wish to live in the few phrases over which those for whom the ancient missal does not suffice run their eyes. Alas ! I know not whether that will be granted me !

Now it is understood, that if you have received more worldly, more gay, more truthful solutions perhaps, you must not deprive them of their recompense either. In this case, give prizes corresponding to the eternal duplicity which forms the bottom of human nature, and everyone will be satisfied ; which is the essential point.

Believe in my sentiments of the most affectionate devotion.

THE CELTIC DINNER.

THE Celtic dinner was, at first, a reunion of poor Bretons, nearly all of whom made verses, and assembled to read them to each other once a month, at the nearest possible spot to the railway station where one alights on arriving in Brittany. Its founder is M. Quellien, a poet himself and the author of Breton novels, full of charm. The price of the dinner was fixed in the beginning, and still remains, at five francs. Its sobriety has remained the same ; but, thanks to an obliging ethnography, the limits of the Celtic race are the limits of the world itself ; all races receive hearty welcome at our little circle. I have seen there Hindoos,

Lithuanians, Hungarians, and even negroes. At desert, cider takes the place of champagne ; poetry overflows in the most widely differing languages; the low Breton sung by Quellien forces applause from even those who do not understand the first word of it.

Quellien prolonged my life by ten years when, about 1880, he invited me to these reunions full of gayety and cordiality. There I find again all my old memories ; I feel rejuvenated by fifty years.

I talk a great deal there, and, as I like to talk at dinners without counting or preparing my words, I emerge from them as from a trip to Brittany, gay—relatively speaking—ardent for my work, attached once more to life.

Although the most absolute discretion is the rule of the Celtic dinner, Quellien knows some journals. He knows that the public are amused with very small matters, provided that they concern persons whose names are familiar, and that what is said of them is not very serious.

The friendship of those who listen to me causes them, moreover, to find pleasure in recalling disconnected remarks, which possessed no other interest than the freedom with which they were uttered. Sometimes the newspapers have contained extracts of them on the following morning.

Twice or thrice it has happened to me, while perusing these good-natured accounts, to find that, thanks to the editors, who put a little coherence

into them, some of my remarks contained a tolerably pronounced Breton flavor. My dear Calmann having recommended me to compose this volume of nothing which was not Breton, I give here two or three scraps of this nature. They refer to the two or three solemn occasions of the Celtic dinner, which are the first meeting in November, the King's (the Epiphany) dinner in January, and that which Quellien calls the "Pardon of the Bretons," at the April reunion.

On the feast of the Epiphany of 1889, the following is attributed to me :

"You know what a horror I have of speeches, especially of speeches at table—and yet, I cannot help saying something in honor of the Three Kings. Yes, I cherish a particular devotion for them. In those days—they were good old days !—the wise men were kings, the kings were wise men ! And what beautiful attributes they had ! One bore incense, another bore myrrh. And the third—prompt me, Coppée !

"Ah, yes ! the third bore gold. A good thing also ! Ah ! they were very chimerical kings, and if they were to arrive in Paris, and offer themselves to universal suffrage—oh! certainly, we should vote for them, eternal children that we are, obstinate partisans of the chimerical. Would we not, Quellien? But what a fine fiasco we should make too ! Oh ! a complete fiasco ! These poor Magi kings ! how they would be beaten ! Evidently universal suffrage is a fine thing. But I think that the Magi kings would have done better

to present themselves in Brittany. There, perhaps, in short—for they were, after all, real idealists, quitting their country to follow a star!—there they would have been received with honors; they would have been cheered. I have no doubt about the matter; they would have been unanimously nominated sovereigns of this kingdom of which we form a part, of which we are the faithful subjects, the kingdom of the eternal chimera! Therefore I wish to propose a toast, in this excellent cider, to the health of the Magi kings—to the health of Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspar."

At the moment when M. Renan raises his glass, cries are heard from all quarters:

"Who is the king?"

M. Renan cutting the cake which stands before him:

"Can it be I, by any chance? Oh, good Heavens! I perceive, a trifle too late, that, in drinking the health of Balthazar, I have drunk my own health. Gentlemen, I am really touched. Here I am king! I have for insignia a bean. What a delicious kingdom is that of the bean! Perhaps it is chance which has favored me. But I prefer to be king under the sign of the bean, rather than to be chosen by universal suffrage. Let us drink then to the bean, to the Magi kings, to the realm of faërie, to the forest of Broceliande!"

In 1891 I repeated myself somewhat; for it would appear that this is what I said:

"How shall one contrive to speak of the Magi after our friend Bocuhor, in his enchanting 'Noël,'

of the other day? What an exquisite little work, what a charming evening he has given me! What good sentiments he attributed to his royal personages! I know not whether those worthy sovereigns possessed so advanced a theology. But what does it matter? They were certainly persons of spirit.

The legend does not state that they came to Brittany. It is a pity they came to Trèves; the fact is certain, since their inn is still to be seen there—the inn in which they stayed—evidently, it was the best in town. Travelers of such importance!

But, if we are not certain that they came to Brittany, it is, at least, excessively probable, is it not, my dear Quellien? Make some researches on this point; you will discover something. And if they did go thither, they must have been extremely pleased. They found there so many good things, a sweet country, good people—and good cider.

They are certainly our patrons. We idealists, detached from the things of earth, follow a star, like the Magi, without knowing in the least whither it will conduct us!

How good was that which they did—they abandoned their subjects, and, after all, we do not see that the subjects grumbled over it. Constitutional rule sometimes makes progress through the absence, the madness, or the minority of sovereigns.

Yes, we are a little like those Magi of the Orient. We are the traveling companions of the stars! That which they followed, not knowing whither it would conduct them, led them to a manger, where, upon the straw, they found that which they sought.

The stars which we follow resemble the star of the Magi; they lead us—upon the straw. We succeed in everything, gentlemen, but I believe that we shall never succeed in becoming rich. That is not our profession. We shall always leave to others the burdensome care of being wealthy. That does not concern us. *Vidimus stellam ejus; venimus adorare eum*—We have seen his star; we come to adore him. I sometimes feel a great curiosity to know what took place in the kingdoms of these good monarchs, during their journey in quest of the true God. I ought to have asked my colleague M. de Vogüé. You know that the Vogüés descend from the Magi kings,—or, at least from the one named Melchior,—and that is why the eldest of the family bears the baptismal name of Melchior, in memory of their glorious ancestor. My colleague de Vogüé must have among his family documents some very interesting information concerning him. It is the same in Savoy, where the Costa de Beauregard, if I am not mistaken, believe that they descend from the good thief, and hence the eldest of the family is always named Bonlarron—good thief! Ah! that is a saint of fine authenticity. . . . . Jesus said to him on the cross: 'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise!' There are few canonizations so regular as that.

It is always Latin and history that the curés know. If I had been a country priest, as it was, evidently, my vocation to be—what a charming profession! How much good one can do, and how happy one can be!—I would have pronounced a panegyric every year on the Magi kings. Not being a country priest, finding myself called to

other exercises, I return to my beaten path with you ; I become parish priest once more."

The Pardon of 1889 was particularly brilliant and animated. Quellien sparkled.

"You have spoken like an oracle, my dear Quellien, and you must be very greatly satisfied and proud to have such a fine Celtic dinner this evening ; a dinner such as you have never seen before.

M. Quellien.—Oh ! Yes, I have ! At Tréguier !

M. Renan.—Yes, at Tréguier only, if you please. Well ! I assure you, gentlemen, that this festival fills me with joy. My friend Quellien has just reminded you, in the most perfect way, of what a Pardon is. One could find a great deal of pleasure in it, even if one did not belong to the parish. There were dances, drinking ; one heard sermons ; one gained indulgences. Indulgences ! . . . . Oh, what a good thing ! Who among us does not need them ? It was a very good thing ; forty days, a hundred days of indulgence, to be won ! It is true that forty days of indulgence, when one has thousands of days of purgatory in perspective, are very little. But, on the other hand, I always figure this purgatory to myself as something charming. It must be an excessively agreeable sojourn ; one always finds excellent company there ; for, is it not true, that it is not the people who are the most agreeable to know, who go straight to paradise ? I imagine that we shall find there discreet, little, somber alleys, where charming interviews will be unfolded, perhaps the continuations of delicious romances begun on earth.

This Quellien is, really, an organizer of the first rank. [Addressing Prince Roland Bonaparte:] Permit me, Prince, to tell you a little of his ethnography; it is truly marvelous. He is convinced that the Celtic race is the center, the pivot of the entire world; but the question is as to how he understands the matter. According to his manner of looking at it, the limits of the Celtic country are the limits of the world. All the world is Celt, and thus it is that we meet at this dinner a company that is excellent and varied in the most delightful manner.

But to return to the Pardons, I often picture to myself those of Brittany in the olden time. At Saint Yves, for example, near Tréguier, I remember that pulpit backed up against the wall of the church—in the Middle Ages, you know, they preached in the open air. The pulpit was reached by a ladder: no other communication existed, either on the interior or exterior—no staircase. The preacher climbed over the balustrade and spoke. On the whole, that which was preached was tolerably within my own sympathies; they preached the pardon of injuries, reconciliation—this, by the way, was a very good thing, and I feel grateful to my dear Saint Yves for having inspired from his tomb so good a doctrine. I have related elsewhere how he was my guardian. At the death of my father, my mother, perceiving the desperate state of my affairs, took me by the hand, led me to his chapel, and confided me to the care of this excellent man of the law. I cannot say that the holy man proved himself a great man of business, so far as I am concerned; I am none the less grateful to him. A few days ago I read the documents which M. de La Borderie has published on

his biography. Some of them made an impression on me. There we behold the man as though he had lived only twenty years ago; his costume, his ways, his habits of action; in everything he was one of the men who has done the most honor to Brittany. His reputation was spread over the whole world. A low-Breton who makes the vast world speak of him certainly deserves some credit for that. In order to find a holy lawyer, people have been forced to come in search of him even to Lower Brittany; it is because there were not many elsewhere.

Heavens! How I should like to preach a lay sermon from the summit of that pulpit of Saint Yves, or from any other. I should have liked to preach! However, I am a priest miscarried! am I not, and the civil dress does not suit me at all. [Laughter.] I should have liked to preach at a Pardon in Brittany, and what I should have liked to preach is a little pacification. Men are too much divided; that saddens me. In my childhood I did not see that; there were great differences of opinion, there was no division to the death, as there is to-day. My father and my grandfather were great patriots; they took part in the revolution. In 1815 the situation became very difficult for my father. The counter-signature of a Chevalier of Saint Louis was necessary on every occasion. The principal Legitimist of the locality came and said to him: 'M. Renan, when you require a signature, I do not wish you to ask for it from anyone but me.' Not a shadow of hatred between the men who had almost discharged shots at each other the day before.

This began to undergo a change in 1830. Thus it was that the mass which was said for the festi-

val day of the King, Louis Philippe—Philippe's mass as it was called—became a great cause of divisions. My mother related to me how, one day, she went to this mass—it was on a Sunday. On her way thither, she encountered Madame D——, a very respectable person, who lived along side of us—an old Legitimist, of course—who said to her: 'What, Madame Renan, are you going to Philippe's mass!' And my mother answered her: 'Good Heavens! Madame D——, I am going to mass, but if it causes you pain, I will not go.'

It is not like that now; people are at swords' points. We who dwell in Paris do not see it. Everything with us is confined to very petty schisms, to schismatic dinners, which signify nothing; is not one free to dine in one's own fashion? But, in the country, it is much more serious. People scrutinize each other and press each other very close. I repeat, let us endeavor to understand each other; human affairs are not worth the trouble, while rending each other asunder over them, of rendering existence disagreeable on account of them.

This is the little lay sermon which I should have liked to preach had it been possible for me to speak in a pulpit, which is forbidden to me.

Well, let us thank our dear Quellien for his initiative, and let us all drink, if you please, to the prosperity of this dinner; not, as Quellien said, to his Pardon of 1909, but, within sensible and modest limits, to its cordiality, to its gayety. May Saint Yves guard us against quarrels and discords. Amen."

At the session, when we reassembled in November, the gentlemen ask me in general how I have spent my holiday at Perros.

"I have seen once more my little old friends: flowers which I have never seen except in Brittany, birds upon which I founded a complete mythology in my childhood. Never do I hear without a shiver 'the bird which saws its heart.' It has a strong hiccough, which recalls the sound of a saw drawn down from above. It troubles me; I imagined inside of him a little diamond saw, with steel teeth, prodigiously fine, with which he made an incision in his heart to keep from suffocating.

The young girls seem to me as pretty and ingenuous as ever; evidently our doctrines have not reached them. They have the same air of gay, resigned credulity. We live all our life on the memory of the heads of young girls which we have seen from sixteen to eighteen years of age. I have seen once more several of the little friends who played with me when I was a child, and who appeared to me, for the first time, to personify duty, charm, virtue. They are no longer my little friends. Poor Manon, my little nurse, who was five or six years older than I, died last year. She belonged to a family of poor Legitimists. We used to have grand political discussions; she maintained that Louis Philippe was not really king. She died happy in the hospital, where I went to see her, for I gave the wherewithal to make for her, after her death, what is called a chapel; that is to say, a funeral exhibition at the gate of the hospital, where relatives and friends come to bid you farewell. A more serious nurse was Marie L——, whom I found again this year. She is a hospital nurse, under the name of Sister Marie-Agathe. She must be more than eighty years of age. I was six years old; I thought her very pretty.

I conferred this distinction upon her at a very

early age. The day after our instalment at Lannion—I was seven years old—I was dispatched on an errand to an aunt, who was very kind to us, where we had two cousins, who soon became great friends with my sister Henriette. I did my errand all wrong; I had forgotten everything. 'Come, whom did you see? Adèle? Alexandrine?' I did not yet know how to distinguish my cousins by name. I replied: 'The pretty one.' That evening my aunt told the tale to my Aunt T——; they laughed a great deal; the one who was not pretty, but who was the best girl in the world, 'made war' on me during the whole evening.

In this connection let me tell you that, a few months ago, I had a lively impression of the pleasure which I used to feel with my young girl companions sixty years ago. It was in my quarters at the Collège de France. One day Yves, my servant-man, came and announced that an old lady and a young girl requested to speak with me. I gave orders that they should be shown in. The young one entered alone, and seated herself with charming grace and ease. She was a child of twelve or thirteen, her face fresh and rosy, surrounded by an aureole of white curls, with an expression of extreme candor. I thought I beheld an apparition, as though one of the little Bretons of my sixteenth year had been resuscitated before me; I thought of the one whom I had loved the most: *Sic oculos, sic illa manus, sic ora ferebat*—These were her eyes, this was her hand, thus spoke her mouth.

My little visitor opened the conversation at once. 'Sir,' she said to me, 'will you accept something from me?' 'Yes, certainly, mademoiselle.' She opened a very tiny card-case, and took from it a small medal, which she handed to me.

As I thanked her, she said, without literary affectation, that I had written a great many beautiful things, that people had quoted to her some of my thoughts which had given her pleasure. Not a word about religion. Oh, profound cleverness of the dove! She knew that the first word of propaganda would have awakened in me the hardened protester, and that once entangled in those arid wastes, one can no longer escape from them. She remained on the ground of which she was the mistress, and allowed me to parade before her I know not what incoherent phrase about the distinction between the gift in itself and the sentiment which had prompted the offering of it. On leaving, she offered me her little hand, and permitted me to press it. I conducted her to the anteroom, where I found seated a sort of elderly nun, who had accompanied her. From the contented smile of the young girl, the duenna understood that I had accepted. I overheard the two women conversing very affectionately about me as they descended the staircase.

I ask your pardon for thus diving with you into my memories, but life, at my age, is made up of souvenirs; it is also made of good moments like this. You really rejuvenate me when you appear so glad to have me at your table that it would be very ungracious of me, next year, not to be in this world, in order to be present at such a gathering."

Quellien has many other notes; I leave them to him; he will narrate all when I am dead. He will do well, nevertheless, to limit himself, and not to fall into the provincial error of assuming that everyone must take pleasure in that which the memories

of our childhood tinge for us with deceptive hues. A certain history of a parish priest in Brittany strikes me as full of philosophy. One day, during the sermon, everyone burst into tears. A stout fellow, who was leaning against the base of a pillar, remained utterly indifferent. "And you, why do you not weep?" he was asked. "I?" he replied, "I am not of this parish."

THE GAULS IN BRITTANY.

DURING the last days of August, 1889, the Archæological Society of Wales, while visiting Brittany, made a brief halt at my solitude of Rosmapamon. In introducing them to me, my friend, Mr. John Rhys, professor of Celtic at Oxford University, was so good as to utter a few words which touched me to the heart. I replied as follows:

"I ought to thank you in Breton, gentlemen and ladies. But it is now fourteen hundred years since we separated; our dialects have had time to diverge widely; we might find some difficulty in understanding each other. And in English. . . . . That is one of my disgraces. In my day, we were taught only Latin. I read English, but I understand it ill when I hear it, and I do not speak it. It is a little the fault of my wife, who has acted as my interpreter on the numerous occasions when I have had need of your beautiful language.

You come from Lannion, the natal town of my

mother. I will relate to you a memory about that little city, which was told me by your great poet Tennyson. During an excursion to Brittany, he passed a night at Lannion. On preparing to depart, he asked his landlady for his bill, and she replied: 'Oh, nothing, sir. You have sung our King Arthur!' Our community of race is one of the historical facts upon which I am fondest of meditating. I have often said to myself, that if the storms which traverse our poor land of France in this century should force me to seek an asylum in England—it is not probable; I am old, and then, this dear country is tenacious of life; one must not get excited over every crisis which it traverses—I should appeal, if only for the sake of amusing the public a little, to the old law of Edward the Confessor: Britones, Armorici, quum venerint in regno isto suscipi debent et in regno protegi sicut probi cives de corpore regni hujus; exierunt quondam de sanguine Britonum regni hujus. [Britons and Armoricans, when they come to this kingdom, must be received and protected like honorable citizens of the body of this kingdom; for they spring from the blood of the Britons of this kingdom.] People remembered the history of the olden days then. Moreover, we have not changed much. We belong to an obstinate race which is always behind the times. Even when, in appearance, we pass from black to white, we remain the same at bottom. Our old saints were very headstrong. Those good old saints of Brittany, all of Gælic or Irish origin, are my great devotion. I do not care much for the modern saints, I confess; they are too intolerant.

Alas, veritable saints are becoming scarcer every day! The modern clergy does not love them;

they say mass once a year in their chapel, but they are not sorry when the chapel and the legend disappear. The clergy has an instinctive feeling that these saints of another day were a bit heretical and schismatic; in any case, they have never been canonized by the Pope. This is what occurred, not very far from this spot, a few years ago, I am told. There was a little chapel dedicated to Saint Beuzec. I think that is the ancient name Budoc. His stone statue had become nearly shapeless; the parish priest took up a collection to restore it. This produced about forty francs, with which the curé purchased from the image-dealers of the Rue Saint-Sulpice, a Virgin of Lourdes, which he cleverly substituted for the decrepit statue. This is the manner in which a saint is suppressed and replaced by the effigy of a melancholy modern miracle. In heaven we know Saint Beuzec is safe from attack. But on earth, what dangers are incurred by these old patriarchs of our race. A few good women still know their legends, which the parish priest feigns to be ignorant of; they must be collected as speedily as possible.

The resemblances are great between us. The differences, on the contrary, seem to me very small. You are Protestants; we are Catholics. Oh, that is a difference of merely secondary rank! Are not Protestants and Catholics the same before God, if they practice their religion from the heart? I am in the habit of saying that, in virtue of many analogies, the Breton populations of France should have become Protestants like those of England. The religious sentiment in these peoples is very profound, very individual, very much detached from forms and books. Renée of France, the daughter of Anne of Brittany, was

Calvin's firmest supporter. The power of Rome in these localities has been created by the French concordats, the result of which has been that, for centuries, there has hardly been a single Bishop in Breton territory who could speak Breton.

You are good English subjects, we are good French subjects: two fine traditions of civilization. . . . . A lofty duty is incumbent upon both of us. It is to maintain friendly relations between the great nations who share us between them, and whose common action, whose rivalry, if you like, is so necessary to the good of civilization. It is so stupid to hate each other. By working for peace, we shall, in reality, be working at a Celtic labor.

Did time permit, I would tell you my ideas as to the ethnography of France and the United Kingdom. My opinion is that the proportion of Celtic and Germanic elements is very nearly the same in both. The Anglo-Saxons did not carry their women with them any more than the Franks did. The triumph of the Anglo-Saxon tongue arises from the fact that, with you, Latin did not kill out the Celtic dialects as it did on this side of the Strait. Anglo-Saxon was extinguished by Anglo-Roman, as the Frank language died out before the Gallo-Roman. . . . . But I have already detained you too long with my loquacity. You are in haste to go and pay your devotion to Nôtre-Dame de la Clâtre, and to Saint Guirec. I will go with you."

CAN ONE WORK IN THE COUNTRY? A SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE SORBONNE AT A GENERAL SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF THE LEARNED SOCIETIES, JUNE 15, 1889.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE.

Gentlemen: When an amiable message from Monsieur the Minister of Public Instruction proposed to me, a month ago, the honor of taking part in this solemn assembly, I was so much touched by the pleasure that I should have in conversing with you for a few moments, that I forgot the wise resolution which I adopted several years ago, never to speak again in this vast amphitheater made for voices younger and more sure of themselves than mine. Nevertheless, the temptation was very great. An audience like yours, the result of an enlightened selection, seems to me a piece of rare good fortune; your reunion appears to me the living proof of a thought which is habitual with me, or, to express it more exactly, like a decisive argument in favor of a protest which always escapes from my lips when I hear the deplorably erroneous opinion announced that one can work only in Paris. On a day like this such an assertion is, assuredly, nonsense. In the presence of such lofty recompenses and of this mass of works to which the most competent judges

render homage ; after listening to your infinitely learned discourses on the infinitely varied objects which occupy the human mind, the learned fecundity of the country requires no demonstration. It is none the less true that the contrary opinion leads many minds astray, thwarts many careers. I should like, in your company, to seek the origin, the causes of this, and, if possible, to point out some remedies by means of which certain real inconveniences may be lessened.

The idea that one cannot work in the country is less than one hundred years old. A hundred years ago Buffon had just died ; the great outlines of " Natural History " had been discovered at Montbard. A little earlier, Montesquieu had discovered the most profound laws of political history at Bordeaux. Not only did men work in the provinces in those days, but they produced masterpieces there. The concentration of intellectual matters in Paris begins during the first years of the nineteenth century. Around this marvelous center of light and intellect, a zone of shadow could not fail to form, by the law of contrasts. A powerful drainage of the intellectual forces of France was in operation. The Constitution of the year III had settled that there was to be a National Institute for the whole of the Republic—a national institute charged with collecting discoveries, and perfecting arts and sciences. A few weeks later, the Convention decreed : " The National Institute of Arts

and Sciences belongs to the whole Republic: it is fixed at Paris."

It is clear that this decision did not arouse a single objection when it was passed. In its first organization, the Institute was composed of a certain number of members residing in Paris and a like number of associate members residing in the different parts of the Republic. At the end of a few years, the impossibility of recruiting the provincial contingent in a suitable manner was recognized; residence in Paris was indispensable. The irresistible law was fulfilled. A maxim which is upheld in practice, even by those who condemn it in theory, could not fail to have deep roots. The exaggerated tendency to Parisian centralization must have had causes, in some direction, in its day.

Its cause, in fact, lay in a very real necessity, in a momentary state of science which decreed that, for a certain period, creative efforts should be concentrated at a special point. The budget of science was slender in those days; its implements were restricted in number; the means of research were singularly limited, could not be separated into small bits without damage. The masters were, also, very few. When Laplace monopolized the problem of the mechanism of the universe; when Berthollet concentrated in his laboratory the efforts of a newly born chemistry; when the battle of natural history was carried on exclu-

sively around Cuvier and his emulators; when Oriental studies were dependent upon Silvestre de Sacy, the multiplicity of schools was useless. It might even have proved fatal. Creation in scientific, literary, and artistic directions generally takes place at well-defined points, hence the creative age necessarily tends to unity. The spot where Galileo worked monopolized astronomy, as a matter of course. When Descartes and Newton held in their brains the loftiest thought of their time, they were also terrible centralizers.

It is not surprising, then, that the brilliant and fruitful period which France has been traversing for the last sixty years should have exacted a center of blossoming, a sort of nest, powerfully overheated and wisely arranged for the incubation of the many germs which have become, at the present moment, distinct worlds. The origin of each science almost always carries us back to a very restricted school—to an egg, if I may so express myself—containing the principle of evolution and the nourishment of the new-born infant.

In order to make the chart of the heavens, an observatory was necessary. The work of renovating the ancient texts was possible only in the neighborhood of a vast library of manuscripts. Abel Rémusat could not have created the science of Chinese in a city where there was no collection of Chinese books.

But the state of affairs is now quite different.

The maturity to which a great many sciences have attained permits of excellent work outside of the centers where the creation was first made. Books and scientific collections are now so numerous that one is allowed to arrive, through reading, at original combinations. Leaving out of the question local history, which is so interesting, at least one half of scientific research can be effected by work in the study. In many branches of sciences—in the majority of Oriental studies, for example—the consultation of old books, anterior to the introduction of modern methods, has only a secondary importance. By means of decidedly limited sacrifices, a sagacious investigator can, on a mass of problems of the first magnitude, assemble about him all the elements for entirely new critical researches. It is even very remarkable that it is the youngest sciences which require the least apparatus, and which can best be cultivated in cities which are not rich in repositories of ancient books. Take comparative philology, for example. By an initial expenditure of a few thousand francs, and a subscription to three or four special publications, one may possess the tools necessary for those long and patient comparisons for which the tranquillity of mind that one enjoys in the country offers particularly favorable conditions.

A very great number of branches of study might be thus pursued in an entirely private manner, and in the most retired localities. The finest example

in this line has been furnished by the illustrious Borghesi, who deliberately selected San Marino, and made it the center of his studies in Latin epigraphy. He preferred a free village, where no one would concern themselves about him, further than to salute him respectfully, to papal Rome, where people would have busied themselves very much with him, but merely to hinder him.

I can say as much of general philosophical ideas. Darwin never wished to leave the village where a sort of chance had established him. Leaving to Paris the great rarities, the limited specialties, the researches which require powerful outfits of tools, the country might also thus undertake with profit a mass of labors which have hitherto been reserved for scientific capitals, and which are now possible everywhere. Let each branch of science have its reviews—if I were permitted to express a wish, by the bye, I should ask that they be not too greatly multiplied—its periodical publications, which keep readers informed of what is being done in each workshop of researches; let the libraries of towns and faculties contain collections which it is difficult for private persons to possess; let each individual take as great care of his library as of a part of himself, and the difference between Paris and the country, so far as work is concerned, will no longer exist, and at the next revision of the regulations of the Institute the article which exacts residence in

Paris may be suppressed without the slightest inconvenience.

Even in that which touches work requiring vast collections of ancient books—work for which Paris assuredly possesses immense advantages—the country is not always aware of the resources which it possesses. A few days after I had passed my examination for a fellowship in philosophy in 1848, I received my appointment as professor in the Lyceum of Vendôme; this vexed me somewhat, because I had begun my thesis on Averroës and Averroïsm; M. Cousin and M. Le Clerc were so kind as to take an interest in the matter. I applied to M. Cousin, who replied to me in a brief note which ran nearly as follows: "If it is a question of certifying to the administration, my dear Renan, that Vendôme is the worst place in the world that could have been chosen for treating of Averroës, I will state to it that incontestable truth." I know not whether Vendôme is, in point of fact, rich in old books of philosophy. But I must say that I made one portion of my thesis in those parts. Having gone to pass a few months at Saint Malo, a city which is not much more learned than Vendôme, I found there a library formed on the basis of ancient stores from convents, where slumbered beneath a thick layer of dust the whole range of scholastic writers; the editions of Aristotle with Averroës' commentaries, printed at Venice, the indexes of Zimara, a good share of the

glosses of the Paduan masters. Ah! certainly, they had not been read for a long time! Had they ever been read, indeed? . . . . Be that as it may, it was among these dusty volumes that I composed many chapters of my history of Averroïsm. I carried away the conviction that if one knows how to make a thorough search one will find in the country infinitely more numerous elements than it is believed for historical works of general interest.

And how much more valuable for such works are the peaceful conditions of country life than the narrow, troubled, unstable, precarious conditions of life in Paris! One of the necessities of erudition is a vast commodious house, where one has neither moving nor disturbance to fear. The philological sciences, like the physical sciences, need laboratories furnished with numerous tables to prevent the different works becoming entangled, and which lend themselves to those personal arrangements of the library that are the half of scientific labor. Moreover, love of the truth renders a man solitary; the country has solitude, repose, liberty.

I will add to this the attractions and the smile of nature. These austere labors require joy of spirit, leisure, full possession of one's self. A pretty house in the suburbs of a large city; a long workroom, furnished with books, hung on the outside with a tapestry of Bengal roses; a garden with

straight alleys, where one can divert one's thoughts for a moment with one's flowers from the conversation of one's books; none of these things are without their use for that health of the soul which is necessary to intellectual work. Unless you are a millionaire, then—which is rare among us—try to have all this in Paris, on a fourth floor, in commonplace houses constructed by architects who have never once put to themselves the hypothesis of a literary lodger! Our libraries, where we are so fond of promenading among the variety of our thoughts and our books, are black cabinets, attics where the books are heaped up without producing the least light. Paris has the College of France; that is sufficient to attach me to her. But certainly, if the College of France were, like an abbey of the days of Saint Bernard, buried in the depths of woods, with long avenues of poplars, oak groves, brooks, rocks, with a cloister where one might walk in rainy weather, long lines of useless rooms, where new inscriptions, molds, new prints, were placed on long tables as they came, one might await death there more sweetly, and the scientific production of the establishment would be superior to what it is at present; for solitude is a good source of inspiration, and work is of value in proportion to the calmness with which it is executed.

We should exaggerate our theme, we should even distort it, were we to maintain that the ad-

vantages for scientific culture are everywhere the same. All cities cannot have an Institute, a Collège of France, an observatory, a museum, a School of Charts. Every faculty of letters cannot have a professorship of Arabic, of Egyptology, of Assyriology. There is, moreover, a certain sort of general stimulation, and, if I may venture to say so, of initiative of which Paris will preserve the secret for a long time to come. The seal of the highest culture can be acquired only at Paris. But, the sacrament once received, one may retain the efficacy and the perfume of it for a long while. The zealous Mussulman, who goes to the holy cities, does not impose upon himself the obligation to live there; he bears about with him everywhere the sacred fire which he has acquired there, the confirmation which he has received there, the spirit which has been communicated to him there. Paris, in the Middle Ages, was the center of intellectual education for the whole world—people formed themselves there, but did not remain there. Each man, after having studied, or even taught there, returned to his own country and developed, after his own fashion, the germ with which he had been inoculated.

Continue, then, gentlemen, your excellent work; continue to enjoy your happiness, which, possibly, like Virgil's laborer, you do not appreciate as it deserves. The happiness of life is labor accepted freely as a duty. This is a fine saying in Eccle-

siastes: *Lætari in opere suo*—Rejoice in your work. As a professor of the Hebrew language, I am obliged to state that the shade of meaning in the original is not precisely this. The author, in this place, desires to speak of the legitimate pleasure which one feels in leading a merry life with the fortune which one has legitimately acquired by one's toil. But, in these ancient texts, the translation is frequently better than the original. *Lætari in opere suo!* The deep satisfaction which scientific work brings, arises from the assurance that one is toiling at an eternal work, of which the object, at least, is eternal; at a work which all enlightened nations are pursuing by the same methods, and from which they are obtaining results which can be compared between them.

I am not one of those persons, gentlemen, who think that the cultivation of the mind ought to be adapted to the region. The human mind knows no region. The true method has nothing local or provincial about it. There is but one chemistry, but one science of physics, but one physiology; there is, also, but one philology, but one science of criticism. All that is mere literary taste, charm, poetry, amusement, religious sensations, memories of childhood and of youth, may clothe itself in local form; but science is one, like the human mind, like the truth. The sick man, the most impartial of men, because he desires but one thing, namely, that he may be cured, would never apply

to regional medicine, if such a thing existed; he will always be for the medicine without an epithet, the genuine one.

The highest intellectual product of each province should have no provincial stamp. All one's life, one loves to recall the song in the popular dialect which has amused one in one's childhood; but no one will ever make science, philosophy, or political economy in dialect. Science, in the scientific order, should not consist in dividing the human mind by provinces; it should consist in suppressing the distinction between the capital and the provinces, in making of all intellectual France a single army, toiling with one common effort for the advantage of science, reason, and civilization.

SPEECH AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE FÉLIBRES, AT SCEAUX, JUNE 21, 1891.

You filled my heart with joy, gentlemen, when you came, a few days ago, to seek me in the arm-chair to which old age has confined me, to associate me with your festival. I am very fond of finding myself with people who still understand how to amuse themselves. It is rare, and it is such a good thing. After much reflection upon the infinite which surrounds us, I have come to the conclusion that the clearest thing of all is that we shall never know much. But an infinite goodness permeates

life, and I am persuaded that the moments which man devotes to joy must be counted among those in which he answers best to the views of the Eternal.

Florian, your patron, and his great master Voltaire, were decidedly of this opinion, and that is why all this pomp of festivity enchants me, gentlemen. You have comprehended that that which rejoices the heart of man, while it makes it better, is inseparable from that which recalls to him his childhood and the land where he has first been happy. Every man's merit is in proportion to the joys which he has tasted at his entrance into life, and to the quantity of goodness which he has found round about him. The language in which we have uttered our first, stammering words, the song in local dialect which we have heard sung at the age of fifteen, a thousand details dear to the heart, which recall to us our beginnings, our humble but honest origin, make of our natal land a sort of mother toward whose bosom we always turn. Memory is, for every man, a part of his moral being; woe to him who has no memories!

Hence you are doing something eminently good, healthy, and salutary, gentlemen, in grouping yourselves round this flag of your native land, which is loved for the most widely different reasons, but which symbolizes nothing but what is pacific and pure. The Breton loves his Brittany, where he has been poor, precisely because he has been poor.

The Norman loves his rich and luxuriant Normandy, because it possesses all the gifts of earth and sky; the Alsatian loves his Alsace, because it suffers—and you, gentlemen, love this radiant land, antique in its genius, always young through its generous ideas, rich in all glories, which has, on so many occasions, given to the greatest thoughts of the French fatherland a sonorous expression that the whole world has heard.

It is a natural consequence of the noble and disinterested sentiment with which you are inspired, gentlemen, that you have desired to associate me, a native of Lower Brittany, with a festival intended to commemorate, amid our rather gloomy country, your ardors of the South, your Provençal splendors. You think that, at the present day, it is not a question of contracting but of enlarging the circle. In loving my Brittany and joining my compatriots, who are dear to me, several times during the year, I do that which you are doing now, gentlemen. We are engaged in the same work: in preserving for the heart its deepest delights, in preventing man from uprooting himself completely from the soil whereon he was born, in saving what simple joys of the soul still remain in the midst of a life that the complicated cares of modern society have somewhat robbed of their colors.

My friend M. Quellien, the founder of the Celtic Dinner, has ideas on this subject which are the inspiration of downright genius. Quellien pos-

sesses an ethnography which belongs to himself alone. Everybody is a Celt, in his eyes. I have seen at his dinner Lithuanians, Hungarians, Poles, Negroes. In the month of April there is a *Pardon*, after the fashion of Brittany, where everyone can be a Breton once a year. You, also, desire that everyone should be a native of the South once a year. Thanks for having given me this delightful day by your invitation.

Science, abstract thought in search of the truth, have no provinces, nor even any country. But poetry, song, prayer, contentment, sadness, are indissolubly bound up with the language of our childhood. Life has many degrees; the life of the whole takes nothing from the intensity of the life of the constituent elements. The bond which attaches us to France, to humanity, does not diminish the strength and the sweetness of our individual and local sentiments. The conscience of the whole is not the extinction of the conscience of the parts; it is the result of it, the complete blossoming of it.

It is through the very depths of our French unity that we sympathize, that we understand each other. The same arteries have nourished us before our birth; we loved each other when we came into the world. I remember well that, long before I left Brittany, I thought of Provence, my imagination dreamed of your "Gai Savoir" and of your Isles of Gold. My mother had an old book

which she called "The Canticles of Marseilles." She was very fond of it; I have it still; it contains charming things.

I was twenty-five years of age when I traversed, for the first time, that country which I had known, hitherto, only through books. Heavens! What a revelation for me! I had never beheld any mountains. On the morning when I awoke in the midst of the mountains of Forez, the dentelated horizon filled me with amazement. Lyons became from that moment one of the cities which I love the most. I descended the Rhone in one day, from Lyons to Avignon. What enchantment! In the morning, at four o'clock, the dense fogs of the quays of Perrache; at Vienne, the beginning of the day; at Valence, a new heaven, the real threshold of the South; at Avignon, a luminous evening. It was the 5th of October, 1849. I was so charmed with it that, eight years later, I wished to take the same voyage with my wife. I was obliged to have recourse to obstinacy. At Lyons, they insisted that the boats no longer ran. We discovered one, nevertheless, which still transported the coarsest kinds of merchandise. It consented to take us; the discomfort surpassed everything that can be imagined, but we were in ecstasies.

Since then your Provence has become the land of my preference when I wish to make a mental journey into the past. Arles, Montmajour, Saint Gilles, Orange, form part of my frames of imagina-

tion for antiquity and the Middle Ages. Your poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is one of the most beautiful classic apparitions with which I am acquainted. Greece is far away, but we have on our own soil a Greece as good as Attica and the Peloponessus—that admirable shore which extends from the mouth of the Rhone to Vintimille, Marseilles in particular; which bears such a strong resemblance to the shores of Hellas that the mariners of Phocæa were deceived by it and thought themselves at home.

Have I renounced the intention of making yet one more visit to those enchanted lands? It would pain me to confess as much even to myself. No; I shall behold your beautiful country once more. I have never been to Aigues-Mortes, to Saint Rémi, to Bau, to the source of the Vaucluse. And then, I wish to embrace Mistral in his own home; I shall go to Maillane. Each year, I pass three months on the seacoast, in the depths of my dear Brittany. Oh! it is a great joy to me. I find there a multitude of little, old acquaintances, birds, flowers, young girls, exactly like those who pleased me in days gone by with their little air of discretion and modesty. But the sun? . . . . Ah! it is rare in those parts, and rather pale. The mists are delightful, but the sun is life. I shall go and ask you for it. If I were rich enough to have two country houses under the open sky, it is among you that I would have a

winter retreat. I do not dream of such an excess of luxury; but you shall search out for me, at some point of your Greek shore, a very tranquil, very sunny nook, with two or three parasol pines where I may go, from time to time, to seek a little lubricating medium for my impoverished muscles, and my unsoldered joints.

I feel a scruple at retarding too greatly, by a long speech, your patriotic exercises and your pleasures. I am in haste to witness those exquisite diversions. I feel in a hurry to assist at your "Court of Love," which makes me dream. What can it be? And your *farandole?* And the *tarasque?* I do not wish to lose anything, even if I must reach Paris at an unseasonable honr.

By your gayety, your dash, your true and just sentiment of life, you furnish an admirable corrective to our maladies of the North—that pessimism, harshness, avidity for self-torture, that subtlety which prompts people who are still young to ask themselves if love is sweet, if science is true, if roses are beautiful! You know how to laugh and to sing; you sing equally well in two languages. Let us then, my dear friends, bless the day which made us brothers, in spite of the evil chances of history. That was a good day.

It is understood that, henceforth, the Bretons are to be welcome among the Félibres, and the Félibres among the Bretons. The kingdom of Is is the brother of the kingdom of Arles, and

there is, also, a domain that is common to both of us, the *realm of faërie*—the only good one which exists on earth. There King Arthur has been detained for more than a thousand years, by bonds of flowers. The four white unicorns who bore him away stand harnessed; at a sign, they will carry you away.

Long live the South, gentlemen; the South which at all epochs has furnished so capital a share to the selection of French genius! Long live that poor Brittany which you have summoned to your festival! And then, long live Paris, the only city in the world where what is going on to-day is possible: Paris, the city in common of the panegyrists, where the Breton holds his Pardons, the Southerner his Félibriges; where each one expresses the poetry of his natal land, sings its local glories, regrets his village, curses centralization at his ease; Paris, where each province lives and flourishes more actively sometimes than at home; where the most varied sentiments are all translated into good French; a very delectable tongue, when it is manipulated by artists like yours, gentleman.

Long live our dear French land, mother of these diversities, all amiable, all excellent in their own way! Your association holds the first rank, among so many other manifestations of consciences, which have vanished, in appearance, but which come to life again in this century of the resurrection of the dead. It owes its rank to your

sagacity, to your breadth of mind. It is this particular gift of accessibility, of openness, of courtesy, to which I am indebted for the favor which you have done me, and which will be reckoned among my most cherished memories. I am old ; I have reached the time of life when one must think of furnishing one's head with thoughts which will occupy him during life eternal. It will be long ! I think that it is the latest images which will be the most tenacious and will fill our immortal soul during the endless centuries to come. Well ! At this moment, I have charming images before my eyes ; I will guard them jealously ; I will place your Félibrige, your Troubadours festival, of 1891 among the things of which I shall think during all eternity.

MEMORIES OF THE "JOURNAL DES DÉBATS."

I WAS brought into relations with the editors of the *Journal des Débats* in April or May, 1853. The occasion of it was as follows. The new edition of the Arabic commentary of the great Orientalist, Silvestre de Sacy, on the "Sessions of Hairi," had just appeared, through the courtesy of Messrs. Reinaud and Derenbourg. M. Ustazade*

* Silvestre de Sacy, being a Jansenist and an Orientalist, had read the "Acts of the Eastern Martyrs," among which Saint Ustazade is one of the most celebrated. He gave this

Silvestre de Sacy, son of the illustrious savant, had been director of the *Journal* for several years; he requested M. Reinaud to designate to him some one among his pupils who could give an account, in the *Journal*, of his father's masterly work. M. Reinaud was so kind as to think of me. I went to present my article to M. Ustazade,* who was pleased with it. He noticed a certain choiceness of language, and he was so kind as to engage me to treat, in the *Journal*, those subjects which came within the limits of my studies, or which suggested to me some thought.

It seems that the religious opinions of M. de Sacy should have formed an obstacle to all sympathy between him and me. There was nothing of the sort, however; M. de Sacy soon saw clearly, that in abandoning positive religious beliefs, I had retained all which was not stamped, in my eyes, with the seal of absolute decay. He divined the living trunk and roots, behind the withered branches. The religion of M. de Sacy, on his side, was far more the perfume which lingers behind a vanished belief than a firm adhesion to definite dogmas. He perceived my sincerity. We possessed in common that taste for serious things,

name to his eldest son, no doubt with some latent thought of the worship which the Jansenists were fond of devoting to unknown saints.

* It was by this name that M. de Sacy was always designated in the private circles of his *Journal*.

which we had acquired, he in his Jansenist family, I in the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. The best translations of the seventeenth century, reduced to peace, met and exchanged the kiss of reconciliation in us.

M. de Sacy had, in fact, preserved the bonds which united him to his father's old sect ; rather the bonds of the heart than those of the formulas. He was a respectful but independent Catholic. He saw, very plainly, the difficulties in the way of belief ; he did not, in the least, seek to avoid seeing them. He did not stop there, but he considered it very good for people to stop there. He did not like apologists, he detested the hypocrites of orthodoxy. The intermediate deists, after the fashion of M. Cousin, satisfied him no better. He often said to me that the God of M. Saisset was the one whom he understood the least. The sects which are approaching their end almost all arrive at this dogmatic latitude. The moral education of believing generations remains ; the letter of the creeds melts away, and leaves behind it only the solid faith in duty which results, by a sort of heredity, from sectarian discipline long continued.

Jansenism, to tell the truth, has been much more of a school of virtue than a school of theology. The heresy of Jansenius, if there ever was any heresy, had reached the point of designating nothing more than the manners of a grave, studious bourgeoisie, which was but little worldly in

its habits, and tolerably analogous to the ancient society of Calvin, but less pedantic and less stiff. M. Ustazade told me that one of the clauses in his mother's marriage contract claimed that her husband could never force her to wear bonnets. M. Silvestre de Sacy's rare merit caused them to prophesy that he would attain a very lofty social rank ; ancient customs were taking their precautions against all possible chances of fortune. M. Ustazade retained these habits of exquisite simplicity. In accordance with an improper custom, which is almost universal, he might have borne the title of nobility which Napoleon I. had conferred on his father. He never did. A delicious simplicity of manners and language was the true title of nobility which he possessed from his plebeian and Parisian origin. He had a sort of aversion for anything that might have given him the appearance of a man of the world. He did not like to go to watering-places for his health ; he said that those cures were reserved for princes, for the nobility, and that the bourgeoisie ought to content itself with old fashioned medicines—the best, perhaps—with cauteries, purging, and bleeding.

I often spoke to him about the gravity of the gentlemen at Saint Sulpice, and, forgetting utterly that Saint Sulpice had treated the Jansenists very badly in former days, he was delighted at what I told him concerning this prolongation of ancient customs. He transmitted to me, on his side, recol-

lections of the life of which he had been a witness. M. de Sacy, the elder, had been an excellent man, beneath his cold, reserved exterior. His son confirmed what I had already learned from M. Reinaud, that, all his life, he had taken pleasure in the society of young women who united a delicate wit to the sensibility of their age. The austere savant rarely went out in the evening. M. Ustazade loved to recall those long evenings in the family circle. M. de Sacy, the elder, busied himself with Arabic, or reviewed the accounts of the benevolent society of his quarter, by the aid of the compartments in a sort of checker-board, while his daughters, his sisters, and his aunts copied printed books. That was one way of passing the evening in this Jansenist society. The senses and the imagination were thus suitably occupied; moreover, they served the interests of the sect by disseminating copies of books the circulation of which was impeded by the authorities. M. Ustazade retained a lively taste for reading all his life, in consequence. "A good old book," as he said, consoled him for everything. One of our colleagues having become rich, by I know not what chance, could hit upon but one way of proving his gratitude to him: it was, to pay court to his library. He gave him Fénelon splendidly bound, so splendidly bound that M. de Sacy took me into his confidence in regard to it. When he wished to re-read the "Letter on the Works of the Academy" or the

"Treatise on the Education of Girls," he borrowed the copy belonging to the Mazarin Library, of which he was the curator, in order to leave the copy which Monsieur B—— had given him in its pristine hue, in its absolute virginity.

M. Ustazade revised my articles with the greatest care. I read them to him, and he made comments on their style, which have been the best lesson in style that I have ever had. As I read, I raised my eyes furtively at certain passages to see if they passed without difficulty. I always yielded when the religious or literary law of this excellent master was transgressed. In the matter of a certain passage which I had written about the devil, he was inflexible, and insisted that in the present state of our religious legislation the devil is entitled to consideration. He withdrew his objection every time that I proved to him that what I had said contained nothing derogatory to the liberty of person. I must confess that, with my theologian's subtlety, I invented turns which deluded him. I sometimes smiled at the heresies which I made him countersign. In literature, he was a pure classic; he considered Lucretius a bad poet; he could not bear to have the texts to which he was accustomed altered, even to improve them; and he admitted to me that when a history like Roman history has given rise to very well turned phrases, that history ought to be fixed, once for all, against the attacks of criticism.

We could not come to an understanding on this point; but he knew French so admirably! He had such an exact sense of the bearing of each word! He corrected so well the juvenile inexperiences of my manner of writing! I came to make a practice of leaving, in my first copy, a great many points upon which I had my doubts, being fully resolved to cut them out at the first sign of discontent on his part.

The *Journal des Débats* was a real religion to M. Ustazade, and he neglected no means to inculcate this upon me. It is to him that I owe the idea, which took deep root in me, that one must never leave the *Journal des Débats* for any reason on earth. He related terrible stories in this connection. He enumerated to me those persons who, in consequence of some aberration, had abandoned the journal, and proved to me that all of them had come to a bad end. One had fallen into financial errors; another into social errors; a third into a dangerous opposition; then all, from error to error, had fallen into demagogy, and from demagogy into misery, which is really death and the cessation of life.

These examples made a great impression on me, and from that time forth one of the fundamental principles of my life has been—one never leaves the *Journal des Débats.* Arrived now at the end of my life, I recognize how entirely right he was, and I am anxious to transmit this good doctrine to

those who shall come after me. The friendship which I find in this excellent establishment is one of the joys of my old age—one of the consolations of my declining years.

I am indebted to M. de Sacy also for several of the moral precepts which I have always followed. In particular, I owe to him the rule never to reply to journalistic attacks, not even when they contain the greatest atrocities. On this point he agreed with the opinion of M. Guizot, that no calumny reaches its mark because he disdained them all. To the various cases when exception should possibly be made, which I suggested to him, he replied: "Never, never, never." I think that I have conscientiously followed the advice of my old master on this point, as well as on many others. One journal published, in facsimile, a pretended autograph of mine, of a nature really to overwhelm me with ridicule had it been authentic. I said nothing, and I did not perceive that it had done me any harm. In the same manner I opposed silence only to the accounts of conversations which would have lasted a week, and which contained not a word of truth; to recitals of dinners and breakfasts furnished by some person who had never received so much as a glass of water in my house. I permitted them to print, without complaint, that I had received a million from M. de Rothschild for writing my "Life of Jesus." I hereby announce in advance that I shall not object when they publish

the facsimile of the receipt. M. de Sacy will be satisfied with me, as he observes me from the height of heaven. Those who require, for the apology of their dogma, to make me out a very black being, will always find means to furnish themselves with arguments. "You will not be believed, fair sirs." I am persuaded that the enlightened* men of the future will see the truth clearly, so far as I am concerned, in despite of all calumnies. And moreover, how indifferent one will become to all the errors of literary history in the bosom of the Eternal Father!

M. de Sacy's counsel was truth itself then. Is it so to-day? The rule which my venerable master preached to me was excellent at an epoch when there existed an enlightened society which formed its opinions in a rational manner. It would be dangerous in a democracy. The masses, in fact, are naturally credulous; their first impulse is to accept what is told them. Methodical doubt is what they comprehend the least. Habituated to rough ways, they believe that the insult which is

* I say enlightened, because the following course of reasoning will, on the other hand, appear very solid to mediocre minds. "It is stated by good authors," they will say, "that Renan received a million. His partisans insist that he received nothing at all. The truth probably lies between these two extremes. Let us be moderate; he received several hundred thousand francs." Decidedly, let us strive to maintain in the drama of the world the final epilogue of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

not replied to is, by that very fact, accepted ; for them, some effect is always produced by it. It sometimes occurs to me that, at the present moment, M. de Sacy would change his opinion. Must reporters, for example, be permitted to attribute to you things a thousand miles removed from what you really think ? The question is a delicate one ; in fact, if you announce that you will make no reply, they will make you speak, all the same, after their own fashion. M. de Sacy might say that, from the point of view of eternity, all this amounts to very little !

The sentiment with which these intimate relations inspired us for each other became a veritable friendship. M. de Sacy always defended me, and was the principal instigator of my entrance to the French Academy. The little speech which he made to the company, to set forth what he considered to be my claims, was so lively, so frank, so natural in style, that many of our colleagues frequently repeat it to me, and know it by heart. "M. Renan," he said, "is a heretic on certain points ; I do not deny that. But I should like to know who among us is not a bit of a heretic. You, M. de Montalembert, do you know that if I were inquisitor, I should not be obliged to seek very far to find sufficient grounds for burning you ? M. de Broglie, is your faith in the supernatural perfectly in accord with orthodoxy ? M. de Falloux, are you a very docile lamb in the fold ? "

And he concluded with these words: "Let us all pardon each other, reciprocally, for our heresies." I will add here a story which I should not have recalled, had not the Princess Mathilde delighted to relate it. One day, on going to see him in his little house of Eau-bonne, she thought she saw him conceal under the table a book which he was reading. Knowing the princess's liberal spirit, and perceiving that her eyes followed the book with a certain curiosity, he showed it to her. It was the "Life of Jesus." "Pardon me, princess," he said, "I thought it was Madame de Sacy who was entering." He confessed that he loved this book, but that he only read it on the sly for fear of being scolded.

The sudden death which removed M. Armand Bertin, shortly after my connection with the *Journal* began, leaves me but few memories of him. I only saw him once, in his apartment in the Rue de L'Université. He repeated to me what the elder M. Bertin was in the habit of saying to beginners on the journal: "Write for five hundred people, we will take care of the rest." A noble journal, analagous in the press to that which the French Academy is in literature; a journal in which highly esteemed men could write, and collaboration in which was an honor; such was the programme which these eminent men laid out, and which they realized, by dint of tact, of knowledge of men, of perseverance and of skill.

M. Édouard Bertin had one of the most complete and just minds that I have ever known. If I do not speak at more length concerning him, it is because the task has been fulfilled by the man whom he loved the most, M. Taine. His intelligence was rare, his culture of the very highest. He sometimes ridiculed a little that taste for antiquity in everything which M. de Sacy cherished; he smiled at his Jansenism, his classicism. M. de Sacy was sensitive to these petty miseries; he confided this to me, almost with tears. M. Édouard certainly took a broader view of things than M. de Sacy. He knew the history of Italian art like a scholar. His knowledge of Christian literature was surprising. Among laymen, he was the best versed in questions of criticism and controversy that I have ever seen. His incredulity was cleverly reasoned out. His skepticism in politics was the result of a perfect course of reasoning. During the siege he was admirable. No illusion approached him. In spite of his failing health, he came to the *Journal* office every day. He listened kindly to the most absurd news; then, leaning toward me, he said: "I don't believe a word of it." His philosophy was curious in search of the true, amiable, and resigned.

Times were very hard indeed for the press, under the Second Empire. One was obliged to be one's own censor; one endured anguish every day. It was then that a considerable change was

effected in the journal. Politics were so little open to free discussion that the life they should have had passed into the literary and moral articles. Intelligent readers looked on the third page for that which the first could not say. The miscellaneous items assumed an importance which they had never hitherto enjoyed. Down to that epoch, the items had been anonymous; they expressed the opinion of the journal as a whole. The author did not revise the proofs of them. On reading them over (it was M. de Sacy who told me this) he often experienced strange surprises. Beginning with the first years after the *coup d'état*, all was changed. The miscellaneous items became filled with double meanings, one felt in them the personal responsibility, the original air of the author. The form of them became much more polished; sometimes it was even too much so perhaps; the criticism of books suffered from it. The public perused these little scraps attentively, seeking between the lines that which the author had not been able to say openly. Thus, under the semblance of literature, many things which were then forbidden were discussed; the loftiest principles of liberal politics were advocated by insinuation.

When people possess liberty, and, especially, when they begin to abuse it, the services of those who have conquered it for them are speedily forgotten. Those who had confessed the faith under Diocletian found, under Constantine, that they

were rather neglected. If our dear Prévost-Paradol were still alive, I think he would find himself the victim of a similar injustice. The talent, the passion, the skill which he displayed in the combat were something extraordinary. His facility bordered on the miraculous. Those exquisite articles were written at the last moment, without a single erasure; the foreman clipped up the lines as fast as they were written, and Prévost did not see them again. So courageous, so loyal as he was withal; his pretended conversion to the Empire was not in the least the interested caprice that it was asserted to be. His death had no significance, either political or moral; it was a material accident, brought about by the intense heat of Washington and by the surprise which the American regimen of iced alcoholic drinks occasioned him. I thought a great deal of him, and he thought a great deal of me; only the world loved him better still, and M. Thiers was like a shutter which cut off half the sky from him. An excellent judge will tell better than I can what this rare man was like, and what he would have been had it been granted him to see the years which followed 1870.

That is, also, a great injustice which attaches to the firm and loyal Laboulaye. He would have liked to be Minister and member of the French Academy; he would have made an excellent Minister, and he possessed more claims to the Academy

than half of those who belong to it. He consoled himself by realizing in his life, by dint of a sustained effort, the ideal of an honest man. I do not think that anyone has understood and practiced better than Laboulaye the rule of the perfect liberal. If he ever sinned, it was by too much love for liberty! Oh, what a fine fault, and how sincerely I pay my compliments to those who have never committed any other faults than this!

Liberalism was the religion of that excellent generation. Their principles were so fixed that, on the day after the catastrophe which seemed to put them in the wrong, they remained exactly what they had been on the day preceding the catastrophe. "I make my sincere confession," said M. de Sacy. "I have not changed. Far from having been shaken in my convictions, reflection, age, and experience have only confirmed me in them. I believe in right and justice, as I believed in them in my ingenuous youth. This principle of liberty, which the times and circumstances have adjourned in politics, I am happy to recover in letters, in philosophy, in all that belongs to the domain of conscience and pure thought. That is what we try to do in the *Journal des Débats*. With differences of shades of taste, and of varied opinions, it is the spirit which unites us all."

M. Cuvillier-Fleury might have said that quite as well as M. de Sacy. His liberalism never suffered any eclipse; no reaction attacked him. He loved

ardently that which he believed to be true. His conversation was animated, he took great pains with it, for it was one way of accentuating the conviction which he bore in his heart. Oh ! what a good house the *Débats* was then, and what a memory we have preserved of those amiable jousts of words, in which M. de Sacy and M. Cuvillier-Fleury vied with each other in wit, dash, and amiability ! At the Academy the tourney began again, inoffensively ; both, in fact, were breaking a lance for the same idea ; everything which was good, noble, generous, caused their hearts to vibrate.

Their patriotism was as pure as the feelings of a child. Above all they saw France ; they believed in her, they adored her. Poor France, it is impossible that she should perish ; she has been too much loved !

What would happen if I were to recall here M. Saint-Marc Girardin, Hippolyte Rigault, Jules Janin, Michel Chevalier, Albouy, Philarète Chasles, whose portrait will be given elsewhere, by the bye, and those valiant colleagues, still living, of whom the law of this memorial forbids us to speak ? M. Saint-Marc Girardin was a man of great political sense. His speech, strong and assured, was heightened by a lively and piquant wit ; he intimidated me a little, as university men in general do. They talk too well. One of my manias is to make incorrect phrases deliberately, where the accent of

thought bears directly on the incorrectness, which renders it prominent. Being accustomed to reprimand it in their scholars, professors do not understand this apprehension of talking like a book, and consider my conversation overladen and heaped up. This dear Hippolyte Rigault was a little of that opinion, I imagine. He was a man of rare merit. His premature death caused us profound sadness. Oral exhibition was so necessary to him that he died when it was prohibited to him. Through the fault of an unintelligent administration of Public Instruction, the serious press and higher tuition were deprived of a man of great talent.

Others will explain better than I can the dazzling facility of Jules Janin. I admired his sparkling fancy! Nevertheless, I know not why, his brilliant atoms never cohered in a durable manner, while a sympathy, mingled with a sort of pity, speedily attached me to Philarète Chasles, that extremely original spirit, that sower of new ideas, who certainly deserved to be pardoned for a few slight irregularities. People were severe on petty defects; they did not perceive grand qualities. The extreme ardor which M. Michel Chevalier brought to bear on social questions made people forget, on the other hand, all political dissensions. During the first half of the Empire, his Saint-Simonian optimism often subjected the nerves of poor Prévost-Paradol to harsh trials. One day he entered beaming; his

first words were : " I have conquered liberty. . . . ." We were full of anticipations ; we demanded explanations. It was a question of the liberty of the slaughter-house. . . . . But he really loved progress ; everyone admitted that he possessed great valor and warmth of heart.

Thus upholding each other, we traversed gayly those melancholy years which elapsed between the *coup d'état* and the year 1860, or thereabouts. A better influence then began to come into play. Governments, in general, improve with age ; unfortunately, they are not allowed sufficient time. The second half of the Empire was far less bad than the first. The new government had recompensed its accomplices and paid its expenses of setting up. It was now permissible for it to think of the public welfare. The personal character of Napoleon III., the very open mind of Prince Napoleon, and of the Princess Mathilde, made themselves felt better than at the epoch when the Empire was enduring with difficulty the tutelage of its first patrons. One could speak of a liberal Empire as of a hope ; a feeble hope, it is true, but still preferable to so many other chimerical or fatal hypotheses. The liberal Empire committed one unpardonable sin—war ; after all, however, it probably granted the greatest amount of liberty that it is permitted to realize in France without provoking excesses ; God, that is to say history, will have mercy upon it. The liberal Empire suffered

shipwreck just as all governments in France, for the last hundred years, have suffered shipwreck. But, in a shipwreck, one does not disdain the chicken-coop which presents itself within reach of one's hand. One clutches hold of what one can: the hour of rescue is not the moment to exhibit squeamishness. This is how it happened that many of us accepted, in perfect honesty, the latter years of that Empire which they did not love, and applied themselves to the difficult task of improving it. The principle of the *Journal des Débats* is to attach itself to the possible, and to prefer modest chances to adventurous investments. We accepted the liberal Empire on the same principle which has compelled us to accept so many other things which we did not like, but which forced themselves upon us, through a fear of worse. We did well; I thought so, at least, and to-day I think so more than ever. In 1860 I consented to take part in scientific work, which they were trying to restore. In 1869 I made an independent electoral campaign, in the department of Seine-et-Marne, which would have proved successful, had it not been for M. Rouher and my own honesty.

The fault which we were led to commit in this instance, if fault there was, it is probable that we shall repeat many times still. Every time that we behold the dawn of liberty appear we shall salute it. Every effort which presents itself as possessing a chance of conciliating the opposing demands of

politics, we shall support. Whose fault is it if all this ends only in disappointments? The century's, not ours. The really constitutional government is not improvised; nations arrive at it when they have earned it. Had we a very strong confidence in the liberal Empire? Did we hope that the personal power would become—by means of a visible transformation, effected before our very eyes—that constitutional royalty, the most perfect of governments, in which a nation enters into a century-long compact with one family, and may, at certain hours, concentrate itself in one brain? Oh, no, certainly not; we hoped little; governments sprung from adventures are strong in the evil which they do; when they begin to do good, they are weak; but success was not impossible, after all. That which, on the contrary, presented itself as wholly improbable, was authority proceeding from universal suffrage, respect created by riot, order emerging from anarchy.

Have the events which followed been of a nature to make us repent of having, in 1868 and 1869, gone to meet a defeat which was half foreseen? We ask that people shall have the kindness to wait twenty years before blaming us. If, between this day and that, a constitutional government shall have succeeded in founding itself, without running off the rails of legality, we will confess that we should have shown ourselves more difficult to please toward the close of the Second Empire.

In the contrary case, we must be pardoned for having believed that *coups d'état* and revolutions are the worst expedients of politics; that one must make the most of what one has, even when what one has is rather defective.

LETTER TO M. BERTHELOT, MINISTER.

PARIS, December 31, 1886.

My Dear Friend: I wish to pass the last hours of this year with you. While you are enduring the review of official congratulations, I desire to return to the dreams which we formed forty years ago, when we knew each other in a little boarding-house of the Faubourg Saint Jacques, when you were eighteen years of age, and I was twenty-two.

Certainly, if you had been Minister then, we should have reformed the world. It would not have lasted, probably. We have learned, as we grew older, that the patriarch Jacob was a genuinely wise man in thinking that the pace of the last little lamb which has just been born should regulate the march of the whole flock.

Many things, in fact, change in the course of forty years, and yet, at the bottom, man and humanity change very little. I remember that, during the hour which we passed together, we read, one day, the story of that hermit of the Thebaïd, who had retired into the desert in his youth, and

passed years there without setting eyes on a human being. In his old age, on receiving a visit from a monk who came from the valley of the Nile, he was seized with an impulse of curiosity: "Tell me," he said to his fellow-recluse, "if men are still the same. Do they still seek to acquire property? Do they still invent calumnies against each other? Do they build houses as though they were to live two hundred years? Do they still marry?" The visitor replied that few things were changed; and the hermit marveled that man was so incurably the dupe of universal vanity.

We think that a capital element for the possession of the true philosophy of life was lacking in those recluses of the desert—that is, knowledge of the world. It seems to us of the utmost importance that one should know that the earth is a ball, about three thousand leagues in diameter, that the sun is thirty-eight million leagues from the earth, and that it is one million four hundred thousand times larger than the earth, and a thousand other pieces of information which form part of elementary instruction. And, nevertheless, the recluse was right, in his own way. The gravest incidents in human affairs have no more importance, when one places one's self at the point of view of the solar system, than the movements in a wasp's nest, or the hurrying to and fro that goes on in an ant-hill. When one places one's self at the point of view of the solar system, our revolutions possess hardly

the amplitude of the movements of atoms. From the point of view of Sirius, they have still less. From the point of view of the infinite, they have none at all. This is the only point of view from which one can judge well of things in their verity. In my "Souvenirs d'Enfance" I have quoted the saying of the old Superior of Saint Sulpice, M. Duclos, to whom a seminary pupil, in the troubled years which followed 1830, was relating, with terror, the doings in I know not what stormy session of the Chamber of Deputies. The young man was particularly struck by a speech of M. Mauguin, which seemed to him the prelude to the end of the world. Those bold, irritating Deputies of the Opposition produced on these peaceful ascetics the effect of downright demons. "One sees plainly, my friend," replied M. Duclos tranquilly, "that those men say no prayers." In fact, I cannot very well imagine M. Clémenceau saying his prayers; M. Laguerre, who is so young, so dreamy, so charming, perhaps. . . . . The prayer of M. Rochefort seems to me to belong to the sort which the fathers of spiritual life term ejaculatory; that stern fighter is not yet quite undeceived as to the reality of things. M. Tony Révillon also does not strike me as having arrived at the Buddhistic *soutra* of the concatenation of effects, and of the complete inanity of appearances. But one must not take fright too hastily. M. Mauguin's speech did not make the world crumble to pieces.

The world dies hard. It is a toy with which one can play for a long time without breaking it.

Our dear director of the *Débats*, in memory of the pretty New Year's gifts which M. Laboulaye used to make to the subscribers of the *Journal*, asked me last year for a dream which should please everybody, not a very solid dream, perhaps; good at the most for New Year's day. It was not an easy task. The present time is hardly that for dreams. The sky is gloomy; the Eternal sometimes has the air of being disgusted with his creation, of finding it tiresome and a failure. That it certainly is not. I find it, as I grow old, more astonishing than ever. But it is certain that men are too much divided. That which enchants some throws others into consternation. I believe that we shall never behold our fellow-men agreed again on any subject whatever. In order to bring them into accord, one must deceive them; and neither you nor I, my dear friend, will undertake that task.

Last year, in order to obtain from heaven the credit of a smile, I applied to the angel Gabriel, and thought myself authorized to impart to the readers of the *Journal des Débats*, in his name, that a change in the government of this world was impending. The disappointment was so great that I have declined to interrogate the celestial messenger this year. You are Minister; that is an event upon which I congratulate the Eternal openly. With this

exception, it is not possible to be more completely mistaken than I was in my predictions. I had announced great things and new things ; I had said that the unexpected must be expected, and, in point of fact, the state of the world on this 31st of December differs as little from the state of the world on the 1st of last January as one puddle differs from another puddle, or one drop of water from another drop of water. The grand resolution which I had assumed that the Eternal would impose upon his functionaries to be just, exact, attentive, has had no results. A frightful negligence seems to reign forever in the offices where the fate of the world is regulated. The celestial policy which was announced as about to become very definite, has been more obscure, more circumspect than ever. This is wise, no doubt ; but hereafter I shall not meddle with prophecies! Great heavens! how did the ancient prophets manage never to make a mistake?

In default of the secrets of the angel Gabriel, I have thought of asking counsel from the gods of India. They are very good gods, whom one adores by dreaming, and who occasionally give us admirable lessons in the art of being all things to all men. The life of Krishna, in particular, is full of good examples which if one could imitate them, would restore to this century that which it no longer possesses—joy, sympathy, concord.

When Krishna arrived, beaming with youth and

beauty, in the meadows of Bradj, all the shepherdesses fell madly in love with him. Krishna, being amiability in person, wished to satisfy all of them. As a god, he possessed the gift of miracles, and of the most astounding of miracles, the multiplication of himself. Thanks to this supernatural gift, he divided himself into as many Krishnas as there were shepherdesses. He danced with all; all were convinced, at least, that he had danced with them. From that moment forth, they believed themselves to be privileged persons. They preserved all their life the precious memory of the divine passage, like a seal of divinity, which consecrated them priestesses of a superhuman ideal.

The admirable point about this miracle of Krishna was this : nothing more simple than that all the shepherdesses should have been persuaded that they had danced with Krishna. That favor would have possessed but a mediocre value in their eyes ; for woman does not prize a gift which she shares with others. But, through a sentiment of infinite delicacy, such as a god may feel, Krishna made each one of the shepherdesses think that he had danced with her alone. Love is egotistical ; it is easily deceived. The beloved being guards his secret for himself ; he wishes to believe that he alone is loved. Each of the shepherdesses took to contemplating her treasure. *Secretum meum mihi* —My secret belongs to me. She believed that she had had no co-sharer in the ideal, that the

great god, at the moment of his amorous manifestation, had existed only for her. Oh ! how pure, pious, and discreet did this thought render them ! They were saints. Believing that they alone had possessed the saint, they remained, all their life, completely satisfied, and lived solely on the contemplation of the god whom they had clasped in their arms to the exclusion of every other.

Krishna was not the only one to practice this miracle of goodness. Buddha, also, understood on occasion to give himself to all, and to make all believe that he had belonged to each individual only.

When Buddha came into the world, ten thousand of the handsomest women in India came to offer themselves to serve as his nurses. He perceived the grief of those who would be rejected, and perhaps the evil sentiment of jealousy which they would experience. He multiplied himself into ten thousand little Buddhas. Each woman held him in her arms, nourished him with her milk, covered him with kisses, and most miraculous of all ! believed that she alone had nursed him and embraced him. Buddhism was the exclusive work of each and everyone of them ; it was their milk which had formed the divine body.

Buddha repeated the same prodigy several times. One day, as he was traversing a burning plain, millions of *devas* and genii flew to spread a

parasol over his head. The saint multiplied himself into as many Buddhas as there were parasols, in order that all might have the satisfaction of believing that their good will had been accepted.

It is said, also, that when he found himself on the bank of an impassable river, kindly beings built him, instantly, numerous bridges. The Saint multiplied himself according to the number of bridges, and each one of those who had made them believed that the god had passed over his, to the exclusion of the others; and all were happy; there were no jealous persons.

Those ancient gods understood better than it is understood nowadays, how to extract from human nature all the enthusiasm and devotion which it contains. They understood how to spoil people. Each person could believe that the world existed only for him; and everybody else around him believed the same thing. Has not Christianity also its multiplication of the divine?

Sumit unus, sumunt mille,
Quantum isti, tantum ille;
*Nec sumptus consumitur.**

These, my dear friend, are tales that I fancy you can relate to your colleagues, in some interval of repose between the sessions of the Council. I have often thought, in fact, that they have a certain polit-

* One eats, a thousand eat, it is in proportion to the people; yet the food is not consumed—referring to the sacred elements in the mass.

ical bearing. Krishna dancing with all the shepherdesses, and each shepherdess imagining that he thought only of her—is that not a masterpiece of policy to propose as a model to those who govern men? Men wish to think that everything is done for them and by them. Each one is quite willing to sacrifice himself to the ideal, but on condition of having made the ideal himself. The great cleverness of the chief of the situation consists in dancing with all, and in making all believe that he has danced with each one alone, does it not? And, in crises, is it not important to allow those who present themselves as saviors to suppose that one has effected one's retreat by passing over the bridge which they have erected?

The miracle of the multiplication of one's self is reserved for the gods. But, for inferior natures, which are very numerous, and who care very little for the mystic body of Krishna, there is a god who is infinitely divisible, and who is never consumed. It is the budget. Each person wishes to have his share of its favors, with the assurance that it will never be consumed.

Sumit unus, sumunt mille,
Nec sumptus consumitur.

The master-stroke would be, possibly, to have all the Deputies members of the commission on the budget, and that each one should imagine that he had made the budget himself. . . . . Would it be possible to bring that about? . . . .

For us, adorers in spirit, always occupied, in accordance with the Brahmanic formula, in "concentrating our mind on Krishna," the Hindoo miracle retains all its truth. The ideal loses nothing by division ; it is contained entire in each of its parts. We live on particles of Krishna, which we assimilate according to our genius. The ideal, for all people, is separated into as many morsels as there are tastes, modified according to the character of each. Each creates his own divine dancer. There is, in fact, a refinement which I would introduce into the legend of Krishna, if I should ever attempt to make of it a drama, or, to express it more accurately, a philosophical ballet. At the same time that all the shepherdesses believe that they have danced with Krishna, it would turn out that, in reality, they have danced with different Krishnas. Each one would have made her Krishna after her own fashion, and when they came to describe their celestial lover to each other, it would appear that their dreams bore no resemblance whatever to each other, and nevertheless it would always be Krishna.

This is the problem which must be solved on New Year's Day, at least : to provide everyone with a dream, in which each one shall find his Krishna ; to fabricate for all a little god, which each one shall caress in spirit. For one, this will be the most perfect of republics ; for another, the most perfect of monarchies. Assuredly, the policy

some day will be to give to every man the prince whom he loves, the woman of whom he dreams, the faith which he desires. Do not you think, nevertheless, that it would be good if this New Year's policy could be encroached on a little the rest of the twelve months?

In a year, if I live, if you are Minister, and if the world lasts, I will resume this mediation with you. The good side of our philosophy is that it prepares one well for eternity. Those who are acquainted with you know how little you care for everything which does not concern your country and the truth. For my own part, I gladly accept the premonitions of a speedy end, provided that it be fine. The most important work of each one of us is his death; we execute this masterpiece, in the midst of gehennas, and with the quarter of our means. If I die within the year, I beg persons of good taste, who are still numerous, not to believe many of the things that will be said about me. I have not been perfect; but my life has always had an objective, disinterested aim. I have been a very virtuous man; to that fact I owe the charm of my old age, and a certain freshness of imagination, which makes me take more and more pleasure in godly creatures.

How ungrateful I should be, did I complain of my lot! For four-and-sixty years, I shall have contemplated the most wonderful of spectacles, the universe. It is less long than the ancient paradise,

but much more amusing. I have contemplated this spectacle from a tolerably good seat, with elbow-rests and footstools to my taste. I have seen the world at one of the most interesting moments of its development. The point at which I have been placed, to enjoy this astonishing display of fireworks, has been excellent.

The planet Earth is unrivaled as a spot from which to enjoy the universe. It is small; but it produces alert and subtle minds. It has had Galileo, Newton, Laplace. The atmosphere which surrounds it is perfectly clear. We are sure that, between us and the most distant stars, there is no opaque body, no screen. Truly, no one in the universe is to be pitied, save those people who inhabit planets where the atmosphere is simply translucid, which does not deprive them of light, but which does deprive them of the view of infinity. Ah! those poor inhabitants of Venus! . . . I understand well how they must rebel! How that milky atmosphere in which they live must limit their horizon! How thoroughly they must believe that the world was made for them! What narrow-minded people they must be! But the inhabitants of the Earth! The infinite is open to them. How can one grow weary with that? And then, what games! what festivals! I am persuaded that the beings whom the breath of God has caused to blossom out on the planet Earth, are the privileged of the universe.

For my own part, I am content. I have believed, in my day, that I had danced with Krishna—an illusion perhaps!—I have built bridges for gods in distress; I have held the parasol over the head of Buddha. Long life to the Eternal! the light is good. Farewell, my friend, until next year, if it pleases God.

A WORD ON THE EXPOSITION. LETTER TO M. JULES LEMAÎTRE.

PARIS, May 9, 1889.

Dear Friend: Certainly I should have been glad to respond to the invitation contained in your note of day before yesterday morning. But what Christ said is true of me: *Spiritus quidem promptus est; caro vero infirma*—The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. A recurrence of my habitual ailments has prevented me, so far, from seeing that dear Exposition, which I bless, since it seems to introduce into human affairs a little joy, oblivion, cordiality, and sympathy. I viewed the preparations for it, a few weeks ago, from the heights of the Trocadéro; it produced upon me the effect of the Villa Adriana, of one of those festivals of the time of Adrian, which were brilliant, a trifle composite, eclectic to excess, but which we love like the last smiles of a dying world. Even supposing that the Exposition of 1889 should be the last

occasion which men will have to assemble for the purpose of giving themselves up to gayety and to amuse themselves with follies, this melancholy thought is not of a nature to render it less poetical and less suggestive to us.

And then, after all, who knows the future? You suppose me to be more pessimistic than I am. Yes, I am alarmed at beholding so grandiose a tradition as that of French royalty handed over to a sovereign so narrow-minded, so giddy, so accessible to calumny, so easily surprised, as the people represented by universal suffrage. I do not deny that the present moment has its advantages and its sweetness. Liberty is greater than it ever has been before in our country, perhaps than in any country in the world. The exaggerated criticisms which are addressed to the present form of government proceed from minds who do not know the past, and who have no idea of what that future, which they conjure, would bring. Provided only that it may last! . . . . That is the only reserve that we make in our contentment. If it were a question merely of our own fragile persons, we should have the right to be improvident, adventurous, daring. But it is a question of France, of her existence, of her destiny. On the back of that page of the *Temps*, where I saw these consoling descriptions of the festivals, that fine speech of M. Carnot, I read, under the heading "Saint-Ouen":

Monsieur General Boulanger.....1043 Elected.
" Naquet, Boulangist..... 981 Elected.
" Laguerre, Boulangist..... 981 Elected.
" Déroulède, Boulangist ..... 979 Elected.

Several persons to whom I have remarked upon it have told me that Saint-Ouen is not a very enlightened locality. That is possible; but I fear that there are, in France, a multitude of cantons which, in politics at least, are not much more enlightened than Saint-Ouen.

That is why I cannot help, at times, perceiving between the rays of this beautiful setting sun a gloomy cloud, fringed with gold, whence there might easily emerge a Roc which would carry off everything. Let us continue to place our hope in reason, and believe in my sincere friendship.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTENARY OF POMPEII.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE "JOURNAL DES DÉBATS."

SORRENTO, September 26, 1879.

Sir and Dear Director: You desire me to relate, in a few words, what the Commission of Italian Antiquities has done to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of an event lugubrious in itself, but which has had, for science, consequences without an equal. The Italian commission had too much

taste to celebrate as a festival a catastrophe which cost the lives of hundreds of persons as intelligent, as civilized as ourselves ; what it wished was a scientific assembly, a memorial addressed to the past, a pilgrimage for those who love antiquity. It has been perfectly successful ; the solemnity to which we were invited was cold and wearisome for the loungers who came to seek a diversion on the ashes of the dead ; in the eyes of cultivated people, it was managed with infinite good sense and tact.

In the autumn of the year 79 occurred one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the globe. An old volcano, entirely extinct, covered with thickets and wild vines, and whose crater had served as a refuge for the desperate soldiers of Spartacus, burst forth with an energy of which we possess no example in historic times, buried four or five cities at its feet, and created that powerful center of eruptive activity which lasts even in our day, and seems to have come and planted itself in the suburbs of a great city in order to allow itself to be studied at ease. Chance has decreed that we should owe the description of the phenomenon to the pen of the best writer of that epoch :

" It was on the ninth of the calends of September [?], toward the seventh hour ; my uncle commanded the fleet at Misenum, when my grandmother came and announced to me that a cloud of unwonted size and form was rising on the horizon. At the first moment, it was impossible for us to tell

from what mountain it proceeded; later on, we learned that it was from Vesuvius. In order to describe the form and appearance of the cloud, I see but one comparison; it is that of a gigantic pine tree spreading out into branches at the extremity of an inordinately long trunk. In fact, carried by the force of the original projection, the uplifted matter mounted perpendicularly at first; then, as the current which sustained it vanished, little by little, weight resumed its rights, and the whole flattened out into a mass that was sometimes whitish, sometimes somber and spotted with black. The horrible cyclone, rent by the sinuous furrows and the vibrating flashes of the lightning, as though it bore in its flames an igneous life, opened and presented to view in its interior all the fantastic play of a tempest of fire; there were lightnings, but lightnings greater than had ever been beheld before. Soon the cloud descended, covered the sea, enveloped Capri, hid it completely, and concealed from sight the jutting point of Misenum. Next the ashes came, rare at first, then like a torrent invading the earth. The obscurity was comparable, I will not say to that of the darkest night, but to which one feels in a closed place, when the light is suddenly extinguished. On all sides were heard roars, the cries of people calling to each other, and seeking to recognize each other by their voices. Some, through fear of death, invoked death; many raised their hands to the gods;

others said that there were no longer any gods, and saw in what was happening the realization of the prophecies which predict for the earth an eternal night as its latter end. 'Misenum has crumbled away,' said some; 'it is on fire,' said others. All this was false, but people believed it. A faint gleam appearing, they did not take it as a sign that the light was returning, but as an indication of the arrival of fire. The fire did not approach us, in reality; the darkness descended once more; the ashes fell again, dense and heavy. We were obliged to rise every moment and shake it off; otherwise, we should speedily have been covered and crushed by its weight. Little by little the darkness lightened; the sun appeared, pale as on a day of eclipse. Troubled clouds floated before our eyes. The world seemed to have changed its face; the land was clothed in a thick layer of ashes, which covered everything, like snow."

Everyone knows how the antique land, thus buried, has been for the last hundred and fifty years a mine of priceless discoveries for archæology. This matter of cities placed in reserve, after a manner, by a natural occurrence, for the use of future archæologists, seems to me almost unique in the world, and I know of nothing, except Velliea, near Placentia, interred by the fall of a mountain, which can be compared to the cities at the foot of Vesuvius. The frightful catastrophe, which took place eighteen hundred years ago, has,

consequently, been a bit of unparalleled good fortune for the study of antiquity, especially since a really methodical management has been applied to the excavations. The first researches were more prejudicial than useful to the city itself, being undertaken solely with a view to enriching museums. They destroyed in order to find ; they covered up the fragments which were not transportable ; they dug here and there, without continuity, according as they fancied they caught a glimpse of indications of good finds. The glory of having introduced method belongs to M. Fiorelli, who was the first to think that the most curious thing resulting from the excavations at Pompeii was Pompeii itself. In the place of holes and subterranean galleries dug at haphazard, isolated parcels were cleared ; the most ingenious precautions were employed to assure the preservation of monuments upon their original site. The result of these fine researches was an ancient city, under the open sky, where one can walk, where one finds fresh, as if of yesterday, the impression of the voluptuous existence led by the Romans who loved the "Greek life," during the first century of our era.

Sorrento is a spot of such perfect repose that I hesitated, at first, to quit it, to pass a hot day, at the close of summer, under the blazing sun, in the middle of a crowd and dust. From my windows, I have before my eyes the great actor in the drama of 79, Vesuvius, which does not seem to

have exhaled his wrath seriously since then; I see Pompeii and the green stretches of the Sarno; I see the little Isle of Hercules in front of the ancient port of Pompeii, an incontrovertible sign of Phœnician counting-houses in these parts. Hence I thought of celebrating, from my chamber, by reading Pliny's two letters, the strange event of the year 79; then ideas of a more active philosophy carried the day; my young friend, Maurice Paleologus, undertook all the arrangements, and we set out, at seven o'clock in the morning, to join the reunion of enlightened men who had assembled on that day upon the ruins of the demolished city.

I had come to Sorrento by sea, a few days before, and I had not yet enjoyed the incomparable sight presented by the road which unites that town to Castellamare. I have been accustomed to say, hitherto, that, in the zone of our planet—very limited, alas!—which I have traversed, the route from Vietri to Amalfi is the most beautiful thing I know. Well! now I hesitate. The sight of the point of Meta, that of Vico, are equal to the most admirable thing that can be imagined in the shape of smiling, amiable nature, completed, finished by man, in proportion with himself. The well distributed waters of the Sarno have given to the plain which separates the pile of Sorrento from Vesuvius a fertility which justifies what the ancients have told us of the beautiful vegetation in

the neighborhood of Pompeii. Many learned men have believed that this plain is a conquest which the eruption of 79, by a sort of compensation, presented to the ancient shore. But M. Ruggiero has peremptorily refuted this hypothesis; he has demonstrated that the aggrandizements of the continent have been very inconsiderable, in this direction, and have nothing to do with the eruption of 79.

We arrived about ten o'clock, when the authorities were taking their seats. There I found Minervini, Fiorelli, those brilliant continuers of the great archæological school of Naples, and with them, Bernabei, Salinas, de Petra, those active disciples, who are reaping their inheritance so well. The programme of the celebration was composed of three parts: first, a speech by M. Ruggiero, who has so worthily replaced M. Fiorelli in the management of the excavations; next, a visit to the monuments; then an excavation executed before the eyes of the public on ground prepared for it. We directed our steps to the basilica where M. Ruggiero was to deliver his speech, and took seats in the inclosure. It was decorated with extreme simplicity; not a flag, no band of music, not even a bust of Pliny! I confess that I rather regretted the absence of this last. The martyrs of science should be honored.

M. Ruggiero had begun the history of the strange phenomenon, the centenary of which had

brought us together, without affected phrases, without declamation, when an incident which was not set down on the programme caused a momentary smile. The gates of Pompeii had been so liberally thrown open that day, that no one could answer for the good sense of all the persons present. A crazy man found means to climb a column and there begin a declamation, which overwhelmed M. Ruggiero's voice for a moment. Universal suffrage did not exhibit itself in an entirely favorable light on this occasion ; the madman's speech was received with tolerably vigorous applause. I cannot say whether the applause was well bestowed. His discourse has not been printed, like that of M. Ruggiero. Here is a trace of inequality, which I point out to high-flown levelers as abusive. Inequality in the eye of the press still exists, perhaps it will be reduced to order one of these days ; in any case, privilege carried the day on this occasion ; for, at the end of a few minutes M. Ruggiero had the field entirely to himself.

While order was being gradually restored, and we were exchanging various comments among ourselves as to the political and social bearing of this incident, I heard a genuine siren's voice behind me ; it was that of M. Palizzi, director of the school of Fine Arts at Naples, a charming man as well as an excellent artist, with whom I had made most agreeable excursions in the environs of Ischia. With him I found five or six friends who

had been my companions on those excursions, and whose conversations had still further embellished those beautiful places, were that possible. "We cannot hear very well," said Palizzi, "and then the madman will begin again. Those people are never discouraged. Come with us." At the same time, he shows me a key, which I took, at first, for an ancient object recently discovered.

"This key is modern," he said to me; "but it will open the only house in Pompeii which has a lock, and that is no small advantage among these 8000 persons. It is an antique house, which has been supplied with a roof and a door for the artist of merit who is present at the excavations and takes a rapid sketch of all the paintings which are discovered, with the true colors of the first moments." "An excellent precaution," I said to him. "How many Egyptian discoveries pass from existence the day after their being brought to light, and perish forever!" "Yes, come," he said. "We will first go and pay our respects to the poor people who died eighteen hundred years ago; then we will go to rest and breakfast in the house of the painter. Come; Ruggiero's speech is printed; you shall read it this evening with a tranquil brain, and the madman will no longer be there."

I yielded to this very amiable invitation; the truth is that M. Palizzi furnished me with one of the most striking sights that I have ever beheld.

The whole crowd was massed around the basilica, and produced by its vivid colors, among those walls of ashen hues, a strange contrast. The remainder of the city was deserted and presented that aspect of melancholy which is so peculiar to Pompeii on ordinary occasions. We visited in particular that street of Tombs, one of the most poetical places in the world; we sat down on those hospitable seats which the dead offers to the living as though to counsel him to repose—oh! what good counsel the dead give! We were on our way to salute the spot, at the gate of the city, where was found the soldier, victim to his duty, when one of our companions stopped us abruptly: "Everything is changed," he said; "that little nook is no longer, as has been thought, a sentry-box; people have been greatly in the wrong in insisting upon seeing, in the body which was found there, the remains of a sentinel who perished at his post, accepting the evident danger of being suffocated rather than flee. This man did not deserve the honors which have been paid to him; perhaps he was a thief." This made us thoughtful. What! Even after death, a hero of duty can be confounded with a thief, according to the caprices of archæology! the body of a thief can usurp, for years, in consequence of the error of antiquarians, the honors due to heroes! How very necessary is a Last Judgment to revise all this! But even in that, what errors are possible! What precautions will be required! This

reminds me of the unhappy wretch who was taken for Billioray, on the 25th of May, 1871, and shot near the Invalides; then the real Billioray was merely condemned to deportation. Ah! the justice of this world! We beheld once more that strange museum, formed of the plaster casts of the human bodies found in the ashes! The flesh having been consumed, molds and good channels were left, into which plaster could be poured, so that the rigorously exact cast of the unfortunate Pompeians, as they expired, was obtained. Nothing could be more striking. The young girl who presses her bosom against the earth, as though to embrace it, with her arms folded, presents the purest forms and the most touching attitude. A dog, a fine greyhound, writhes, with head held between his legs; he was fastened at the door of a house; as the inundation of volcanic cinders rose, he rose also, but his cord soon stopped him. M. Ruggiero has brought to the study of these difficult Pompeian questions, admirable patience and method. He has resolutely discarded the hypothesis of water, and the hypothesis of fire. Undeniable facts establish that Pompeii was not drowned in a torrent of liquid mud, as has been asserted. The invading matter did not penetrate inclosed spaces. The oven, in which was found bread in the process of baking, was perfectly clean and empty inside, with its eighty-one little loaves; and it was only partially closed. A well, the opening to which was

preserved from the invasion of the volcanic cinders, was not filled up; the water gushes up there, at the present day, at a depth of twenty-five meters.

The system of conflagration is not admissible either—Pompeii did not perish by fire. The lead is not melted, the marbles are not calcined, bits of cloth and of wood adhere to metal, and are not carbonized; the mural paintings are exempt from the action of fire and of smoke. Some facts, which seem to lead to a contrary deduction, are explained, either by the fall of incandescent scoriæ, or by lightning, the action of which is produced with extraordinary violence around orifices of eruption. In reality, Pompeii was covered, in a few hours, with a layer of volcanic cinders and ashes equivalent, with the cumulative action of the rain, to seven or eight meters. Almost all the inhabitants, to the number of 12,000, were able to make their escape; about 500 lingered and perished. The rain of volcanic cinders preceded that of ashes; they could preserve themselves from the former, by barricading themselves in cellars and enclosed places. This explains the imprudence of the 500 unfortunates. They awaited the end of the shower of fine stones; they did not count on the shower of ashes which suffocated them. Events took place very nearly as in 1872; only, on this last occasion, the shower of ashes was much more feeble, and people were merely put to the incon-

venience of using umbrellas in the streets of Naples.

Meanwhile, M. Palizzi led us gradually to the agreeable nook which he had prepared for us. The heat was very powerful, the shadow of the old walls was very narrow; we finally arrived at the threshold of our desires. M. Palizzi preceded us, key in hand. Oh, surprise! the little house was occupied . . . occupied by an excellent company, moreover—ladies, who were engaged in partaking of a frugal repast. We looked at Palizzi; Palizzi looked at us. What was the value of that key on which we had founded our hopes? We applied to the corporal who stood near by; we explained the case to him, he reflected at length: "There must be two keys," said he. This hypothesis was no more probable than those which are sometimes hazarded on the subject of Pompeian problems; we did not contradict it, but we remained convinced that the modern door, which did not adapt itself well to the ancient framework, had been forced. Naturally, we pretended to be happy at having been anticipated, and, after taking precautions that the incident should not be repeated, we set off to pay another visit to the houses called the house of Diomed, the house of Sallust, and those of the Vestals and the Dancing Girls. Then we found well-earned repose in the tiny house which our discreet predecessors had finally vacated. M. Palizzi explained to me the results of

the long sojourn which he had made on the ruins of Pompeii, and, in particular, his observations on the streets and ways. He pointed out to me the extremely unequal pavements of the streets, and how this state corresponded exactly with the limits of the houses, so that the conclusion which must be drawn from it was that the pavements fell among the obligations of the proprietors abutting on them.

I was examining attentively the interesting paintings, the experiments in restoring ancient houses, which covered the walls, when the unforeseen made its entry once more, in the person of a porter, carrying a bale corded with the utmost care and cleverly concealing its contents. The idea had been, no doubt, to turn aside the eyes of desire of such people as should behold the mysterious basket on its passage, and it had been given the appearance which an archæological package might assume.

It was the breakfast prepared by our friends—an exquisite breakfast, if ever there was one—and which reminded me of the collation which we had found all ready, when we were making the tour of Ischia, in the desert bay of Monte-Santangelo. At Pompeii it was the best wines of France that these gentlemen gave us to drink; we preferred to them that *asprino*, which the common people buy for two sous, but which is not to be found in the hotels which respect themselves, and a wine of the Abruzzi prepared in French fashion, which

seemed to me to have a fine future before it. My young friend Maurice was enchanted; he was undergoing his apprenticeship in Italian cordiality, and had not reached his twentieth experience, as I had.

I made the remark that it was, perhaps, impious to breakfast so well in the house of the dead, but some one replied:

"That happened a long time ago; and, after all, are they greatly to be pitied? They would be dead, all the same, and see how people talk of them, and occupy their minds with them. Do not you think that the Egyptians who were sacrificed in the construction of the Pyramids live to-day far more than those who paddled out the normal sum of their years in the mud of the Nile? The insect pinned to a card in the museum, and which, by its beautiful coloring, evokes a cry of admiration from a pretty mouth, the animal which serves for the demonstrations of science, are privileged above their fellows, who remain obscure."

Palizzi did not approve of this paradox, and justified our little feast in another way.

"Have you not noticed," he said to me, "in the street of Tombs, those semicircular benches, arranged expressly in the form of scholæ, so that the country-people might come thither to rest, chat, and discuss? It is an amiable idea of the dead man to offer to his survivors an agreeable moment, and, above all, that good counsel, to

relish the honest joys of life without imagining that they will last forever. And do not you think that the funeral feast was a pious act in its own way?" "Certainly," I replied, "and among those of our ancestors who preserved longest their barbarous customs, this repast was bound to extend even to drunkenness, to bloody battles. The same thing still exists in Ireland; in Brittany, also, people would think that they were lacking in respect for the dead did they return from the funeral in full possession of their reason."

I was on the point of continuing when a movement arose in the street. It was the result of the excavations which was being brought to the central office. "What!" said I. "Have the excavations been made in our absence! Can you imagine our remaining idle, when they were at work?" My companions smiled. "What do you suppose excavations made in the presence of eight thousand persons amount to? There is nothing serious about them; no one but the prefect of Naples can have taken much interest in them." We followed the three or four flat boxes, bearing the arms of the King of Italy, which contained the objects found. Ah! good Heavens! What a result! There was hardly anything in the boxes but the bones of dead people. Well! On thinking it over I came to the decision that this was full of tact. This result proved the honesty and scientific seriousness of the directors of the festival. It

would have been so easy to prepare some discovery in honor of the public, who expected something of the sort! M. Ruggiero had denied himself this innocent bit of trickery; the pickaxes brought up only kitchen utensils, broken pots, and a very considerable number of skulls and thigh bones. It is evident that the house investigated was one of those where the people tarried longest.

Those poor pagans suggested to me many reflections. One of the fundamental principles of my life, a principle to which I cling obstinately, although many of my friends declare it an enormous cheat, is to consider as an honest man every human creature of whom the contrary has not been demonstrated to me. Consequently, I saluted these poor remains, and I wafted a kiss of peace to the honest people to whom they had belonged. There are persons who profess exactly the contrary doctrine, and persist, more or less, in regarding everyone who has not been proved to them to be an honest man, as a rogue. Good Heavens! I think that they are as often deceived as I am, and I persist in believing that, if one bears in mind the innumerable difficulties of the human state, general benevolence is true justice. Among the dead, whose bones lay there before my eyes, there were, perhaps, resigned slaves, faithful servants, the wounded of life who had arrived at irony, which is, also, after its fashion, a species of wisdom. That skull yonder is, perhaps, that of the bitter scoffer

who drew a little ass on the wall and wrote below it: "Labora, bone asello, sicut ego laboravi, et proderit tibi, sicut mihi prodest."* I have not the "Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum" of Berlin at hand to verify the text. M. Zangmeister and my dear colleague Leon Renier must pardon me if I have made any mistake.

I saw with pleasure an inscription traced on a column of the forum, of which M. Fiorelli sent a stamp to the commission of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum" a few years ago. This stamp then seemed to us absolutely inexplicable, and we classed it, provisorily, in the category of unknown inscriptions. But the fine publication of the inscriptions of Safa, near Damascus, made by Messrs. Waddington and de Vogüé, has illuminated the Pompeian text in a striking manner.

These inscriptions, the deciphering of which is the work of M. Joseph Halévy, are genuine Arabic inscriptions of the Roman epoch. The *graffito* of Pompeii belongs indubitably to this group. It is not in the least surprising to find an Arab writing his name on a column at Pompeii, since, about the same time, some Nabatæans of Petra left at Pouzzoles so many marks of their passage, and in particular two fine inscriptions in Nabatæan characters.

It was at this moment that I made the acquaintance with a fine volume which was to be distributed

* Labor, good little ass, as I have labored, and it shall profit you as it has profited me.

on the morrow, and which will remain as the record of this scientific solemnity.* It is composed of a series of memorials on the problems raised by buried cities. Therein M. Ruggiero and his collaborators set forth, with the authority which belongs to them alone, the new views at which they have arrived, as to the history of the great phenomenon of 79. Here again my philosophy was subjected to some trials, for one of M. Ruggiero's best established results, is that the eruption, according to all probability, occurred on the 23d of November. Pliny's text leaves room for doubt, but a multitude of details observed by M. Ruggiero seem to prove that the event took place towards the close of autumn. The vintage had been finished, and the operations which follow it must have been far advanced ; the amphoræ, in general, are not found in the cellars ; they are in the domestic offices, in the kitchens ; they were at work on them ; they were putting into them the pitch and resin, the ordinary condiment of ancient wine. M. Ruggiero draws the same deduction from the fruits which are found, and those which are not found, in Pompeii. This ran somewhat contrary to my impressions, and I mentioned the matter to one of my friends. "All days are alike," he said. "How many anniversaries you have disarranged or suppressed in your books ! Does that prevent

* Pompei e la Regione Sotterrata dal Vesuvio nel anno lxxix. Naples, tip. Gianni, in–4, 291–245 pages, avec planches.

people continuing to celebrate the festivals on the same day as usual? Books and the ways of the world have nothing to do with each other."

But the day was already declining, the railway station at Pompeii was filled with people, the locomotives set out on their return to Naples. We cast a glance at the king of the festival, Vesuvius, who had been too much forgotten. Vesuvius is in a state of great activity at the present moment; the immenseness of the crater, which vomits smoke at its full capacity, is nowhere to be measured so well as from Pompeii. Seen through the street of Mercury, the old giant showed himself really grandiose, mythological; there he stood, proud, disdainful, content with his work, quite ready to begin it all over again. The aspects of Vesuvius, studied by the hour, as one can study them from Sorrento, are the spectacle which gives the best idea of the mythological conceptions of the ancients. The somewhat human attitude of the gaping monster, the very diverse and always plastic aspects presented by the plume of smoke, according to the direction of the wind and the time of day, give the idea of a living being, which has rages, has passions of his own. One can conceive that the Greeks and the Italiotes should have addressed prayers and sacrifices to these capricious and irritable beings, in order to placate them; one can conceive how the Jew beholds in them an agent of the wrathful Jehovah. I meditated, in

particular, on the Apocalypse, and on the extraordinary amount of space occupied in the book of Enoch, and in almost all the Sibylline prophecies, by the volcanic accidents of the Bay of Naples. The great phenomena of eruptions and earthquakes of the first and second centuries of our era are the only ones of the sort which have exercised an influence on the history of thoughtful humanity. They troubled people's imaginations, and, in combination with the ideas of the Jews as to an approaching end of the world, they produced that idea of a conflagration in which the ancient world was to perish because of its crimes. *Judicare seculum per ignem*—The world is to be judged by fire. Dangerous words, which must not be too often repeated! For by dint of repeating a thing too much, one inspires people, sometimes, with the idea of realizing it.

We returned to Sorrento at a fresh and delicious time of the day, finding the places charming which we had regarded quite otherwise under a different illumination at eight o'clock in the morning. My young companion performed nearly the whole of the journey on foot, climbing up the slopes, escalading the rocks to enjoy the admirable view. Arrived at Sorrento we triumphed over those who had been afraid of the crowd, the dust, and the official ceremonies. There had not been a trace of dust in Pompeii; the official part had been reduced, with perfect tact, to its just measure, and, as for the

crowd, thanks to M. Palizzi, we had only had a distant glimpse of that. Our triumph was complete when we began to extol the asprino; everyone desired to taste it; we ordered some; there was none in the hotel, and I even think that our order brought down upon us a certain amount of discredit.

THE PORTRAITS OF SAINT PAUL. LETTER TO M. MÉZIÈRES OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

PARIS, April 8, 1879.

My very dear Colleague: On reading this morning in the *Journal des Débats* the charming words in which you bade me welcome into the company, I was still more touched than I had been on Thursday, by so many tokens of friendship, and by the share which you are so kind as to take in the religion of my dearest memories. Our disagreements are a trifling matter; for I subscribe heartily to what you say regarding the respect of the religious conscience; I fear as much as you the advent of a brutal force, void of ideal beliefs; I sometimes reproach myself for not liking to dwell in the middle regions of literature, and as for Marcus Aurelius and Faustina, I abandon them, since you wish it, although it is impossible for me not to be struck, on beholding the most pious of men, in his most intimate converse with the divinity, associate

Faustina with the noblest persons whom he has known—with his mother and sister. This proves that, of the two hypotheses proposed by Capitolinus—*Vel nesciit, vel dissimulavit*—Either he did not know, or he concealed it—the second is impossible. But what matters it, since all the world agrees that Faustina was a charming woman, and since Marcus Aurelius remains the author of the "Thoughts," that is to say, of the most exquisite book that heathen antiquity has bequeathed to us?

I do care a little about the ugliness of Saint Paul, for I would not like to seem to have caricatured him, on any consideration. I certainly should have done that, had I been the author of the portrait which you quote as coming from me. On page 170 of my "Apostles," I have mentioned the texts on which I based my statements. No doubt, you have thought them lacking in solidity; permit me to submit to you a few observations whence it will appear, I think, that this portrait is the exact reproduction of the manner in which the disciples and admirers of Paul conceived his image about a hundred years after his death.

The phrase which you cite is, in fact, in great part borrowed from the third paragraph of the celebrated "Acts" of Paul and of Thecla.* Tertullian, in his treatise on "Baptism," chapter 17, gives us the most interesting details concerning the origin of this book. He relates that this pretty

* Tischendorf, "Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha," p. 41.

romance was the work of a priest from Asia, a very great zealot on the subject of Paul's glory. Being pressed with questions as to the sources whence he had drawn these beautiful narratives, the priest, driven to the wall, acknowledged that he had composed the book himself "out of the great love which he had for Paul." *Convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse.* This is charming, is it not? What a flash of light this remark casts upon the manner in which veracious history was understood! To attribute to a great and revered personage noble adventures, speeches which were supposed to be sublime, far from passing for a culpable imposture, was a meritorious act. They gloried in it, and assumed that the personage whom they had taken for their subject ought to feel himself highly honored. But is it in consequence of this same sentiment that one could be led to attribute to one's hero a small head, a long nose, eyebrows which met in the middle of his forehead, and bandy legs? I do not think so. *Convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse.* One can never believe that it was out of love for Paul that the priest from Asia invented this portrait. I incline rather to think that the Asian priest expressed himself thus because there existed a traditional image of the great apostle which he contented himself with reproducing. Assuredly, the "Acts" of Paul and Thecla contain fabulous things, although quite recently our learned col-

league, M. Le Blant, who is a great authority in Christian antiquities, has pointed out its historical authority in many respects, and its value in the matter of local color.* That which appears certain, at the least, is, that having occasion to trace the type of the apostle, the author cannot have done it contrary to the generally received ideas. One cannot imagine that in writing a book destined, in his opinion, to glorify Paul, he should have presented the latter with features almost ridiculous, and contrary, at the same time, to the image of him which people held.

At what date was this romance composed, this romance so full of grace and tenderness, probably the most ancient of all Christian romances, which, if it were translated to-day by a clever man, would probably have, in the pious as well as in profane circles, for opposite reasons, the greatest success? Tertullian wrote his treatise on "Baptism" about the year 196; it is certainly one of his first works. At that date the "Acts" of Thecla enjoyed great authority in certain Christian churches. Tertullian combats this authority, and informs us that the priest of Asia, the author of the book, was already dead, when he wrote. We are not too bold, therefore, in referring the date of the composition of this book to the year 175 or 180. Paul died a little before the year 70. The author was toward St.

* In the *Annulaire de l'Association des Études Grecques*, for the year 1877.

Paul, therefore, in the same situation, as regards time, that we are in now toward Voltaire.

Certainly, it is possible that the text of the "Acts" of Thecla, which has been published by Grabe and by Tischendorf, differs in many respects from that which Tertullian had in view; but this text is, in any case, very ancient. Tischendorf and Grabe are persuaded that it is the identical work of the Asian priest, slightly altered.

That which decided me, moreover, to give the passage from the "Acts" of Thecla a place in my narrative, is the astonishing coincidence of the queer portrait sketched by the priest of Asia with one of the most entertaining passages of the dialogue entitled "Philopatris." You are acquainted with this amusing little work, preserved among the writings of Lucian, but which certainly did not belong to the scoffer of Samosata. The "Philopatris" is dated with great precision. It is from the reign of the Emperor Julian, and even from the end of this reign, about the year 363, at the time when the unhappy emperor was already engaged in his fatal war with the Persians. It is the work of an enemy of Christianity, solely intent on representing the new believers as chimerical dreamers and enemies of the Roman state.

"Formerly," says the Christian Triephon, "I nourished myself with the same doctrines as thou, up to the moment when I had the good fortune to encounter a certain Galilean* with a bald forehead

*Galilean is used in the sense of Christian.

and a long nose, who had ascended to the third heaven, and who had learned the most beautiful things there. That man regenerated us by water, and rending us away from the world of the ungodly introduced us into the company of the saints."* There can be no doubt that the question here is of Saint Paul; the ecstasy in the third heaven does not admit of hesitation. It is hardly probable that the pagan author of the "Philopatris" had read the romance of Thecla. If he agrees with the priest from Asia, it is because he was acquainted with the traditional type which the Christians attributed to Saint Paul. This tradition is not to be disdained; you are not ignorant of M. de Rossi's fine writings on the portraits of the apostles Peter and Paul; he has fully established, if not their value as real portraits, at least their high antiquity. When I see the coincidence of these respectable images with the texts, I really cannot believe that I have given too free play to the imagination by following such old indications.

The Byzantine historians present precisely the same description of Saint Paul's features. I will cite, in particular, Saint Nicephorus† and John Malala.‡ These authors add several features to those of the "Acts" of Thecla and of the "Philopatris," evidently derived from the portraits which they had before their eyes. Now, my dear col-

* "Philopatris," chapter 12. † Hist-Eccl., ii, 37.

‡ Chronogr., p. 257, edit. Bonn.

league, you who have resided in Athens, and who are so well acquainted with the Eastern Church, know better than anyone the force of tradition in the religious paintings of the Greeks, and how invariably each saint's type is there established.

The most extraordinary point is, that after having sketched the portrait of St. Paul, as I have done, Nicephorus, Malala, and even the author of the "Acts," to a certain extent, insist that Paul was handsome, in spite of it all. How can we explain this singular contradiction? In my opinion, by the force of tradition, which imposed itself upon those who would have the most desired that the face of the apostle to the Gentiles should correspond to the importance of his supernatural rôle. They affirmed his beauty *a priori*, although fidelity to tradition compelled them to transcribe certain traits which, more or less, gave the lie in the most startling manner to this affirmation.

One capital reason, finally, forbids us to neglect such testimony; it is, that it answers perfectly to the idea that Saint Paul himself gives us of his personal appearance, and of his temperament in the two epistles to the Corinthians, that is to say, in writings whose authenticity is absolutely undeniable. The apostle informs us that his appearance was fragile, and not in the least imposing. The frivolous Corinthians openly gave the preference over him to preachers better endowed in respect to the exterior, like Apollos. "His letters are

weighty and powerful," they said, "but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."* Paul makes constant allusion to his bodily weakness; he represents himself as a man who has only a breath, ill, exhausted, and timid withal, without fine appearance, with nothing which produces an effect, so that his disciples, according to him, are meritorious because they are not deterred by such a wretched exterior. Neither did his speech possess any charm. A certain timorousness, embarrassment, inaccuracy, gave, at first, a poor idea of his eloquence. Like a man of tact, he himself laid stress on his external defects, and made capital out of them, with great cleverness.

Paul's temperament, according to his own testimony, was no less singular that his exterior. His constitution—evidently very tough, since it endured a life composed entirely of fatigues—was not sound. He speaks mysteriously of a secret trial, "of a thorn in the flesh," which he compares to an angel of Satan, occupied in buffeting him, and whom God has permitted to attach himself to him, to prevent his growing proud. Volumes have been written on this little point, or rather, on that thorn in Paul's flesh (*Skolops en sarki*). It was certainly an infirmity; Paul forbids us to understand it as carnal lust, since he himself informs us that he was not very accessible to that sort of temptation. For two months, I meditated on that passage; that thorn in the flesh seemed to me the exact

* II Corinthians, x, 10.

definition of rheumatism, a real angel of Satan, who does, in fact, buffet cruelly the patient who is delivered over to him by way of salutary humiliation.

You see, then, my dear colleague, that if I have gone astray in the matter of the likeness which I have traced of Saint Paul, it is much less through abuse of imagination than through confidence in tradition. I recognize the fact that this tradition does not constitute absolute certainty; it is certain that a good photograph would be worth more. In spite of the doubts which cling to it, it seemed to me, nevertheless, that such statements should not be passed over in silence. Tradition, legend, even, cannot be entirely banished from serious history; they contain their share of truth; they show, if not how things took place, at least how they were thought of. I employ the most scrupulous forms of language, in order to distinguish that which is certain from that which is probable, that which is possible. But I consider myself authorized to accord the probable and the possible a place, on the condition, of course, of multiplying the *perhaps* and *it seems to me*, and the other phrases expressive of doubt, of which one must not be sparing on such a subject. That which I never do is to add a material circumstance to the texts, a detail to the pictures of manners, a stroke to the landscapes. I understand the general effects in my own way; I never introduce into them an element which has not been furnished me. Origins are always ob-

scure ; in order to divine the effaced pages of the old histories, one requires a power of divination into which there enters a personal element. It is almost impossible to know exactly how things have taken place ; the goal which criticism sets up for itself, is to rediscover the manner, or the various manners, in which they might have happened. But the assumption of material circumstances not supplied by the texts would be a proceeding fruitless and unworthy of the historian ; I never employ it.

I desired, my dear colleague, to clear myself from the charge of having made Saint Paul ugly. That great man, who set so little store by a fine appearance for himself, since he tells us more than half a score of times that he possessed the least possible external advantages, would not be offended with me for so small a matter ; but in the portrait, which you quote as coming from me, there would be an intention to caricature, and that I must dispel. I should have need of the intercession of the saints. A good Capuchin, who read the article which I published, a few years ago, in the *Journal des Débats*, about Saint Francis d'Assisi, was delighted with it, and, from that day forth, when he heard people speak ill of me, he said : "Oh ! no doubt . . . . ; but he spoke well of Francis d'Assisi, Saint Francis d'Assisi will save him." That is a powerful intercession ; I hope that Saint Paul will add his to it, in consideration of the

trouble which I have taken, not to represent him as a handsome man, but to show him as one of the strongest and most extraordinary souls that have ever existed.

Believe, my dear colleague, in my most sincere friendship.

REPLY TO THE SPEECH OF RECEPTION INTO THE FRENCH ACADEMY OF M. JULES CLARETIE, FEBRUARY 21, 1889.

Sir: It is more than a quarter of a century since we met, for the first time, at M. Michelet's. The hospitable place, the affection which attached us to the master, and a rare community of sentiments, united us. You were in all the fire of your first revolutionary ardors; I was under the influence of the inward conversations which I had held in the East, like the disciples of Emmaus, with a mysterious wayfarer. We came to an understanding with considerable promptness. Shall I confess it to you? I believe that, during those first conversations, we said some evil of the French Academy. Oh! the Academy, sir, is infinitely indulgent about the evil that is said of it. Coarse insults do not reach it; it accepts the gentle reproaches of men of talent as marks of love, and it takes good note of them for its future favors. Certainly, there is one point upon which

we were perfectly right; it was when we expressed our regret that the company did not count among its members the exquisite master, the charming historian, who consoled us in our sadness of those days! But what would you have! A literary company infallible! We should almost be afraid of it. Academies make no pretension to possessing the rule of absolute justice. It is sufficient if they are right sometimes. Room must be left for unforeseen unions, for the witty freaks of chance, for amiable encounters, in fine, like that which has brought us together in this place to-day—you, entered as a volunteer in the free band of literature of twenty years ago, to take the place of conservator in this senate—I, a mistaken but obstinate disciple of Saint Tudal or Saint Corentin, to wish you welcome, and to press your hand in the name of an old friendship.

I was sure that I should please you, sir, by returning with you to these memories of the time when, as Petrarch says, we were, in part, other men than we are to-day. The best mark of nobility, as you said a while ago, is to love each other as we were in our youth, to remain faithful to the illusions athwart which we first discovered life. I do not think that we have changed much; we are still incorrigible idealists. I see you trait for trait as you were then. Enthusiasm was the dominant character of your nature, and if those uneventful years, in the middle of the Second Empire, had

permitted hazardous protestations, I think that you would have thrown yourself valiantly into the breach. Revolution was like a gulf which summoned you. Your sentiments were all for that instinctive devotion, for that manner of toying with death, which lends an irresistible attraction to the characters of the Revolution. Your history of "Prairial" is a genuine martyrology. You have unfolded, one by one, in the "Archives," those pages penned by your heroes on their last nights; you have kept beneath your eye the dagger which killed Romme, Bourbotte, Soubrany; like the deacon in the times of persecution, you show us the red phial and the bloody handkerchief. "Claretie's book," said M. Michelet, "has made me shudder. It is so burning, so cruelly true!" You have gone through all our fevers, sir, you have tasted all our fits of madness. But, what shows well the solidity of your judgment, you have returned from your journey to the country of death without leaving behind any part of yourself, you have traversed the chaos without ever losing your footing.

Since that time you have marched from success to success. After having traversed all the circles of hell, you have contrived to smile so naturally that people have believed that you have done nothing else all your life. Your mind, at once both supple and firm, capable of becoming passionate and of dominating its passion, was very promptly approved of by the public, which has applauded you

at the theater, followed you with favor in history and romance, read eagerly those weekly chats—a new style of article which you so ably defined a while ago, and which has, to some extent, superseded the ancient French form of correspondence. The most important organs of public opinion have made it a point to confide to you their chronicles of the day, those rapid judgments of a referee, which class a case, define it, frame it, while leaving to the future the care of taking it up again and discussing it. It is in this department, sir, that you have shown yourself to be in direct line with this century. This dear nineteenth century, the future will say a great deal of evil concerning it; people will be unjust if they do not recognize the fact that it was charming. Such it appears in your pictures; it constituted one of my relaxations to read you, when you were writing those beautiful pages. Even when, by profession, one has chosen the company of the dead, the light of the sun is sweet. This Parisian life may seem superficial, at times, I confess; but it offers an admirable procession of pleasant images. It is a good furnace to consume that surplus of life which philosophy and science do not absorb. A considerable part of humanity lives on the chronicle of Paris. The world will lose something on the day when it no longer has it.

Your romances in book form have added fresh touches to that great romance without an end which, for years, you have unraveled day by day.

Your episode of the love affairs of the patient at La Salpétrière is exquisite. The "Million" is a delicious novel, with the suavest perfume. The "Flag," "M. Michelet's Cane," breathe a touching patriotism. "Monsieur le Ministre" has raised a smile at certain weaknesses which a false prudery often affects to take tragically. Politics have touched you without stifling you. The Comédie Française and its interests, which are inseparable from those of the French mind, have prospered in your hands. When you sought our votes, assuredly your merits were sufficient to obtain them; you desire, nevertheless, that the public should know that your nomination contained an amiable salute from our company to the society of excellent artists which is charged, like ourselves, with watching over the national language and taste. May the Comédie Française, which is represented here in virtue of a right that we shall take great care not to forget, be so good as to accept the expression of an ancient fellowship which makes us proud and happy.

In choosing you to take the place of one of our colleagues whom we have loved the most, we were sure, in advance, that you would trace a perfect image of him. You have completely fulfilled our expectations. M. Cuvillier-Fleury, in the pages which you have just read, is precisely as we knew him, with his brisk ways of an upright man, his faith in healthy literature, his confidence in reason and good cultivation of the mind, his absolute

devotion to France, a devotion which permitted the most loyal of patriots to consider nothing foreign which the country has desired and admitted. You have eulogized the educator in the best manner—I mean by his pupils—by one of his pupils in particular, by that accomplished colleague whom exile has taken from us, and whom we regret so keenly not to see among us to-day, to join with us in the praises bestowed upon his master. You have eulogized the undaunted liberal, who was shaken by no reaction, who always remained faithful to that ideal of respect for the right, of benevolence and of uprightness, which France has raised in the world as the creed of the honest man. You have painted all this in excellent outlines; for, if you have not been intimately acquainted with our colleague, you possessed, in regard to him, the most perfect documents, the living confidences of a discreet witness of his trials and his joys. The best part of a beautiful life is that which is continued in the memories of a faithful wife. You have known our colleague in that sweet prolongation of existence, which is granted to those who are worthy of it. He has appeared to you, surrounded by that tranquil light which precedes the grand oblivion of the second death; thence proceed the delicate shades which give to your portrait so much harmony, those traits of profound resemblance which have charmed us so greatly.

The *Journal des Débats* had erected a rostrum

which was surrounded by an extraordinary audience, and whence each word fell with authority. The anonymousness of a group of men, which parity of talents and similarity of opinions merged, so to speak, into a single person, had come to constitute a political and social power of whose importance we can now form an idea only with difficulty. The Messrs. Bertin presided, with the tact and moderation which an undisputed title confers, over the debates of that supreme court of the French mind which realized, to a small extent in journalism, what the Academy is in literature. M. Cuvillier-Fleury was, for the space of fifty years, one of the most active members of that exalted council of *Dii Consentes.** His criticism, a perpetual lesson of good sense and uprightness, was extended to extremely varied subjects. It was rightly considered, then, that the rule of the good and of the beautiful is, in all points, identical, and that a mind formed by the good discipline of antiquity may serve in the most diverse exercises.

Nearly the entire century passed thus before the eyes of our colleague, and he judged it well. Whatever may be the opinion which people may one day profess regarding the literary movement

* In the Etrusco-Romish language of religion, the *Dii Consentes* were the twelve superior deities (six male, six female) who formed the common council of the gods assembled by Jupiter.—*Trans. note.*

of which the year 1815 may be regarded as the initial date, and 1870 as the final date, no enlightened man can refuse to that which was in agitation during that period, in the depths of the French conscience, originality, goodness, and fecundity. The stock of ideas bequeathed by the eighteenth century and the Revolution was insufficient. A slender thread of clear voice may possess agreeable notes, but it will not suffice for all the modulations of the human spirit. In ridding itself of the chains of old beliefs, which easily degenerate into a deliberate choice of intellectual mediocrity, the eighteenth century imposed upon itself a far more burdensome chain than that of orthodoxy—the yoke of a sort of narrow good sense, reducing the world of the mind to something scanty, petty, coldly rational. Science had been released from the restrictions which religion caused to weigh it down, until nearly the eve of the Revolution, and that is, surely, a point of capital importance ; but a sort of dryness of heart and imagination rendered this progress hardly perceptible, on the whole. People were free to think, and, as a matter of fact, they thought very little ; the immensity of the events of war and of the political revolutions had absorbed the best forces of humanity. The world longed for something, and in fact, as soon as peace appeared, and under the influence of the name alone of liberty, an extraordinary awakening took place in all classes. People

opened their minds to foreign ideas ; a multitude of things which had hitherto had no names in French, asserted their right of entry into the inclosed field of our battles and gained a great deal by being transferred to this fresh atmosphere. People comprehended the infinite, the popular, the spontaneous. The language gained in suppleness, in extent, in shading. Humanity took to reflecting, more harshly than it had ever done before, on its destiny. We do not know whether all the problems which that period propounded have been solved ; but, assuredly, history will refer to the first half of our century immense conquests in the order of the mind, a general sentiment of courtesy, of gentleness, of taste for liberty, an extraordinary enlargement of the circle of the imagination, a notion of science, of philosophy and of poetry of which our respectable ancestors in the eighteen century possessed only a very distant sentiment.

M. Cuvillier-Fleury assisted in this grand intellectual battle of criticism, and in the quality of a combatant. You have explained to us finely the species of duality which always divided the literary conscience of our colleague. Although the base of his classic faith was never shaken, he was powerfully attracted by the moderns. At bottom, he had a weakness for that which he combated and a secret taste for the qualities which he did not commend. *Dulcia vitia !*—charming defects—

the expression is Quintilian's. It might have come from M. Cuvillier-Fleury. He blamed and loved at one and the same time. He has been shown to us as wittily taking a certain book from the hands of his pupil and perusing it himself with passionate delight. He never departed from the rules of judgment and naturalness, and, nevertheless, they contained some of those "charming defects" which he was forced to love. Was it weakness? No, it was impartiality, profound instinct for the truth. Almost all the faults of the nineteenth century have come from a lofty principle. We are sure that posterity will pass the sponge over many deviations from the right path, at the memory of so much ardor, so much sincerity, so many noble aspirations.

How can one be just, in fact, otherwise than by loving and hating, turn and turn about, that brilliant generation which received with a light hand and bore without embarrassment the heavy heritage of ancient France, of the Revolution, of the Empire, but which was not able to transmit anything to those who came after it; which caused the value of finished form to be felt in literature, and left but few irreproachable works; which instituted a reaction against a general tone of factitious pompousness and of exaggerated solemnity, and was, itself, rarely exempt from affectation; which, with a wealth, an exuberance, an amplitude of genius which were truly extraordinary, produced

thousands of excellent books, not one of which is quite sure of a future? The cause of this lies, above all, I hasten to say, in the infinitely delicate nature of the thoughts which we seek to express. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, revolving in a very limited circle of ideas, denying themselves every thought which could not be contained in the ready-made frame, more easily attained to a finished style than a century like ours, which is surcharged with knowledge and is persuaded that the human mind is being restricted when it is confined to clear ideas. There are so many things which we can only augur, divine, presage! The defects of the moderns frequently arise from the fact that, in a hand to hand struggle with the infinite, they wish to say too many things. But how many other weaknesses these great innovators, whose disciples we are, might have avoided! The good epochs of Greek and Latin antiquity, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had accustomed us, when it was a question of intellectual works, to seek naturalness before all things; people wished to touch a man in the author; modesty was considered one of the conditions of pleasing. All that was changed by the new generation. The pain, often necessary, which a delicate soul often accomplishes at the beginning of life, only with fear and trembling, was called, by a frightful barbarism, "asserting one's self." People were satisfied with sonorous words, which the great centuries

had employed with much discretion. Unbridled vanity and presumption, the love of success at any price, were received by the public with exaggerated indulgence. A certain romancer proclaimed himself as greater than Napoleon, and this did not appear too strong. The most immoderate effusions of a childish braggadocio succeeded in making themselves accepted.

How good the ancient codes of morals were, applied to literature! Old masters of Port Royal, who thought that, when one possesses a superiority, one must seek, above all things, to conceal it, what would you have said to this twaddle, to this false varnish of greatness, which passed by, with head held high, fifty years ago, without being stigmatized by Pascal? Ah! sir, it is difficult for an epoch to get along without an aristocracy! Tact and taste need protection. What an error to believe that a society where the man of letters occupies, or thinks that he occupies, the first place, can keep its waterline straight! Human affairs are far more complicated than is believed; the dignity of the writer is better sheltered behind ancient social conventions than behind the pretended guarantees of property. The idea which people formed for themselves, forty years ago, of the man of letters, rich, brilliant, making his way gallantly in the world, habituated them to the false conception that the writer, that is to say, the honest man who has something to say to the public, exer-

cises a profession, and a lucrative profession. Such a conception, founded on a moral error, caused solid acquirements to be neglected, encouraged superficial work, diminished in the masses that respect which they naturally entertain for nobility of mind.

One of the consequences of this literature, which was, above all, witty and light, was to accustom the public to be too much amused. The almost exclusive perusal of romances became a real source of degradation for women. Reading, to be salutary, ought to be an exercise implying some labor. From this point of view, it is good that books should not be written entirely in ordinary language. People reached the point of demanding, as an essential condition of prose destined to persons of society, that it should not necessitate any sort of attention on the part of the reader. In this there was a just return to human things. France, in the eighteenth century, had made its liberal and anticlerical campaign as an amusement. It was decreed that this amusement should prove fatal to it. It had slain the folios of the Benedictines, the quartos of the academies. A little frivolous volume, to fit the hand, said its enemies—there it is dying of lack of force. One cannot count the truth for an indifferent thing with impunity. Even light literature can be made seriously, and without the master faculties of the reason undergoing damage.

To sum up, in a word, the defects of an epoch which, by every hypothesis, will remain great and honored, I will say that the half century, of which M. Cuvillier-Fleury has been the enlightened critic, was too literary an epoch. Admiration was complacent; authors were spoiled with petting; people habituated them to be easy toward themselves, to seek brilliancy, flashy colors, and the beauties of ostentation. Poetry and reality were too much mixed. Poetry is made to carry us out of our depth, to console us for life with dreams, not to influence life. At the epoch of the *Astrée*, plebeians of the Quartier Saint-Antoine were seen to sell their stocks in commerce, in order to turn shepherd and pasture imaginary sheep. Nowadays, the dreams are less innocent. *Morbus literarius!*—The literary malady. The characteristic symptom of this evil is that people love less things themselves than the literary effect which they produce. One comes to view the world as through a theatrical illusion. The public, attacked by the same malady, seeks nothing but what makes a picture; the illumination of the footlights disgusts them with the light of day. In this manner, all right appreciation of things is impeded. The good and the beautiful must first be loved for themselves; the aureole created by success, the applause of the human race, come afterward, or do not come at all. To tell the truth, they come when they are not sought; they do not come

when they are sought. It is not wholesome to talk so much about glory, nor to adjudge to one's self so haughtily the future. The future will not, perhaps, have much time to read us ; it will be too much occupied with itself to occupy itself much with us. I fear that the abnegation of the realistic writers, who aim at nothing, so they say, except to prepare documents in the modest intention that future centuries may know us, will be but ill requited.

This question, which we hear so often propounded : "What will remain one of these days, of the works of the nineteenth century?" has something superficial and ingenuous about it. People have been led astray by the great fact which has happened twice or thrice in history, of classic literatures, whose prestige has extended to very diverse nations, in very different centuries, and which have remained models for the human race. It is not probable that this phenomenon will occur again. The progress of civilization, of which we are the witnesses, lies in extension, not in delicacy. We shall never again, judging from all appearances, see languages learned with a view to literary culture by those whose mother tongue they are not. The separation of nationalities, carried to excess, will make each nation think that there is no need to go and ask models from other nations. Moreover, people will consult more than they will read. The books of prime importance

will be made over every twenty-five years. Each newcomer will profit by his predecessors, and will probably say a great deal of evil about them at the same time. Translation itself will interfere with the reading of originals. Molière, Montesquieu, Voltaire, owed little to translations; they were read in French.

Vanity of vanities, sir! The centuries which prate the most about immortality are those which are the least assured of it. I will say as much of that strange abuse of the word genius, which is never more prodigally employed than when there is the least of it, and of those pretended privileges which the true man of genius has never either known or claimed. Genius is, in general, very modest! it asks only one thing, that it may be left in peace. It is wrong to make existence hard for it; but its duty, also, is to win pardon for its singularity by dint of simplicity, of apparent vulgarity, of deference for other men. The future is to the brave, I willingly admit; but the future belongs, above all, to the modest; those will endure who have never given it a thought, and who have never believed themselves assured of the suffrages of posterity.

In order to establish those literary authorities which are called classic centuries, something especially healthy and solid is necessary. Common household bread is of more value here than pastry. Literature which desires to be classic,

that is to say, universal, should be of a nature to be applied. That literature is good, in this respect, which, transferred to practice, makes a noble life. A life conducted according to the literary maxims of the seventeenth century will be upright and honest, whatever the proportions of that life may be. Modern literature cannot endure this ordeal. Assuredly, the artist is not responsible for the nonsense that people make of his work. The rustic, who stupidly swallows a perfume that has been given to him to smell, cannot blame anyone but himself for his folly. But, in order to be eternal, the least that one can do is to submit to some exactions. Everything which owes something to the caprice of the moment passes away like that caprice. What fashion makes, fashion also unmakes. A thousand years hence, probably only two books, the oldest books of humanity, will be reprinted, Homer and the Bible. I am mistaken ; for the tedium of future generations, extracts, chosen by the professors of literature of that day, will also be printed, with a view to examinations. There will be, perhaps, a few half-pages of some of us among them, accompanied by an interlinear translation in Volapük. *Debemur morti nos nostraque*—We and our works must die.

Thus, in consequence of some errors in æsthetics and history, liberal France lost the fruit of rare efforts and of exquisite gifts. The authors of

that day have the air of believing that they will remain forever young; they take no care to prepare for themselves a literary old age. They forget, above all, that humanity is a noble personage, and that it must be represented in its nobility. After their day, people amused themselves with a low class of scamps, of demoralized scapegraces, with Vautrin and Quinola. They allowed themselves to acquire a false taste for the ugly, the abject. They tried to make a viand of that which should serve only as condiment. The painting of a manure-heap can be justified, provided that a beautiful flower springs from it; otherwise, the manure-heap is only repulsive. The reality, alas! one encounters at every step. It has no need of being provided with documents; we know it but too well.

People insisted on novelty at any price. They established an auction where they outbid each other for paradoxes. They had reached the last icy peaks of Parnassus, where all life had ceased; they insisted upon mounting still, and were astonished that the public no longer followed. The public, on the whole, displayed a great deal of sound sense. Enervated by the brief duration of literary reputations, it lost all faith in literature, and beheld in it only a pack of cards tumbling down upon each other. The man of merit who, instead of flinging himself, in cold blood, into Etna like Empedocles, demanded the honor of

his life only from serious services, was held as of very small account. A fundamental error! Woe to the nation which does not know how to make proper use of the useful man who is exempt from all pretensions to genius and immortality! Genius is rare and often dangerous in application; in order to make sure that it will live, a nation should be able to dispense with it; it cannot dispense with good sense, conscience, assiduity in labor, uprightness.

A great moral enfeeblement was the consequence of the bad intellectual diet to which France had subjected herself. The poison produced its effect, though it had been taken in small doses. People had created for themselves a necessity for unhealthy liquors, good, at the most, to tickle the palate for a moment; that which was inoffensive as a diversion, became bad as a habit. True intellectual culture, which had been too much neglected, took its revenge; giddiness had no longer any counterpoise. An hour of surprise sufficed to ruin a compromise devised by the wisest minds. A cycle of horrible occurrences was opened by those ill-starred days, which France has not yet expiated, it would seem. They cheerfully committed the capital error of submitting to the masses the question which it was the least capable of answering; the question as to the form of government and the choice of a sovereign. The child of ten, on whom they had imprudently conferred the rights of

majority, committed follies; what is there surprising in that? They demanded reason of that throng which, in one day, could show itself the dupe of the grossest charlatanism and stupidly accessible to every calumny. They imagined that, without a dynasty, they could constitute a permanent brain for a nation. Hence an annoying diminution in the central reason; the *sensorium commune* of the nation found itself reduced to almost nothing. With precious qualities of courage, generosity, amiability, the best endowed of nations, by dint of having allowed its center of gravity to descend too low, beheld its destiny committed to the caprice of an average of opinion inferior to the grasp of the most mediocre sovereign called to the throne by the hazards of heredity.

Weak in resistance, this generation showed itself harsh and narrow in reaction. We have seen, sir, the blind reaction which followed 1848, sad years in which our youth languished, and whose bitterness we would gladly spare those who shall come after us. Our fathers did not fulfill toward us the first duty of a generation to its offspring, which is to leave it an established order and fixed national framework. We shall, probably, fail in this duty toward those who come after us. Betrayed by our elders, we shall have for excuse that we could not bequeath that which we had not received. We made great sacrifices to draw the least evil result from an evil age; they will serve no purpose.

Ah ! how true is the old Hebrew proverb : "Our fathers have eaten green grapes, and the teeth of their children are set on edge ! "

Are we to bring accomplished facts up for trial? Certainly not, sir. Our tastes in history are very nearly the same, I think. We have, if I may say so, the same set of patrons, fools, and enthusiasts. Fanatical causes are so dear to me that I never narrate one of those heroic stories without feeling a desire to join the band of believers, to suffer and die with them. You love your *Camille Desmoulins*, your condemned of "Prairial"; you grow impassioned in behalf of each one of them. I love them, after your description, with their melancholy eyes, their long hair which gives them the look of apostles, those ardent convictions, that style, at once declamatory and touching. There is, nevertheless, a little difference between us, perhaps. We are thoroughly agreed upon the point that the progress of the world takes place by impulses communicated by fanatics and violent men. Only, you protest when they are guillotined. . . . . After all, they have willed it so. The work of fanatics succeeds only on condition that one speedily gets rid of them. Careers of this sort should be brief. Let us imagine Camille Desmoulins and Lucile dying in 1840, or 1845. It would be as shocking as to picture to ourselves Jeanne d'Arc living to the age of seventy. The prophet who passed over the walls of Jerusalem

crying: "The voice of the East! The voice of the West! A voice against Jerusalem and the temple!" kept within his part, when he added: "A voice against me!" and the stone launched by the Roman balistas, which struck him full in the breast, gave him the only death that was really suitable for him.

The Revolution, as you have very plainly perceived, must not be judged by the same rules which are applied to ordinary situations of humanity. Viewed outside its grandiose and fatal character, the Revolution is only odious and horrible. On the surface it is an orgy for which there is no name. In that strange battle, men count in proportion to their ugliness. Everything serves there, save good sense and moderation. The foolish, the incapable, the wicked, are attracted to it by the instinctive feeling that the moment for their usefulness has arrived. The success of the days of the Revolution seems obtained by the collaboration of all crimes and all insanities. The wretch who knows nothing but how to slay experiences fine days. The fallen woman, the madwoman from La Salpétrière finds employment there. The times demanded madcaps and rascals; they were served to their heart's content. One would have pronounced it the yawning of the gulf of the abyss, with all the infernal vapors of a corrupt century obscuring the heavens.

But we must not dwell upon these hideous de-

tails, which are the price we pay for the aid of the populace. When one surveys the whole—when one takes into account, above all, this grand coefficient of human things, victory, which causes many mad attempts to be judged by their success—the general phenomenon of the Revolution appears like one of those great movements in history which are dominated and directed by a superior will. The fixed idea with some of these madmen: "The Revolution must succeed at any price," became an obsession, a voice from without which imposed itself, a tyrannical suggestion. From that moment the Revolution had a genius, which presided day by day over its acts and which, in the matter of success, made no mistake. A pact of terror united thousands of men, and put them into that state of impersonal enthusiasm in which one is swept away, to life, or to death, upon a ship which one has launched but which one can no longer steer.

France alone could offer this incredible mixture of mind and ingenuousness, of ironical gayety and concentrated wrath. It was a mad "emprise," after the fashion of the chivalrous vows of the Middle Ages. The wagerer succeeded by virtue of fury, by love, by enraged conviction that he must succeed. And these men, possessed of a fixed idea, were so thoroughly in accord with that which was willed by the force of things, that one asks one's self in vain what the world would be had the Revolution not succeeded. It was necessary,

as the attack which saves or kills. It leaves us suspended between admiration and horror. The Revolution is the most violent of human spectacles that it has been given to us to study. Even the siege of Jerusalem cannot be compared with it. It was a work as unconscious as a cyclone, carrying away without selection everything within its reach. Reason and justice are trifles to the colossal whirlwind. Like the leviathan of the book of Job, it is created to be irresistible ; like the abyss, it fulfills its vocation, never saying, "It is enough."

That is why the men of the Revolution are the objects of such contradictory judgments. These laborers at the work of giants, viewed by themselves, are pygmies. It was the work which was great, and which, taking possession of them, transformed them in accordance with its needs ; when the fit was past, they became once more what they had been before, that is to say, mediocre. Take your Camille Desmoulins, for example. I think I shall not wound you, sir, if I tell you that he really amounted to very little, a straw borne by the wind, an enthusiast, a blackguard of genius, as you call him, a giddypate, carried away by the intoxication of the hour. His philosophy of history does not extend beyond Vertot's "Roman Revolutions." His style ! ah, sir, you have upheld it ! I compliment you on your patience. In those days a man was a great writer for two or three years. The terrible gravity of events made men of genius for a year,

for three months. Then, abandoned by the spirit which had sustained them for a moment, these heroes of a day fell with their strength exhausted, maddened, haggard, stupefied, incapable of beginning life again. Napoleon did right in making expeditionaries and subaltern chiefs of them.

Their literature, as a whole, is very weak. They wrote badly and, what is singular in men so thoroughly convinced, in a pretentious manner. When one undertakes to print their complete works, one finds one's self face to face with an empty void. To tell the truth, their work was the Revolution. For so short a passage athwart life it was not worth the trouble to cast one's words in bronze or to build solidly; they aimed only at the effect of the moment. Such an epoch could not produce a solid style, any more than it could produce durable edifices. Member of the Convention Romme, on the eve of his death, writes pages and pages. He is anxious "that people should know how he died." This is ingenuous and awkward. Nevertheless, I read and reread, with profound emotion, that passage filled with somber fire which you have published. Your picture of the death of the last Montagnards is touching and beautiful. The horrible machine worked badly that day. It was necessary to set Bourbotte up again. He profits by the fact to make a speech; with his neck fast in the fatal plank he still speaks. Duroy, with his head under the knife, exclaims:

"Unite; all embrace each other; 'tis the only means of saving the republic!" Ridiculous phrases, uttered in such a situation, undergo a great change in their æsthetic character. They possess at least one quality—they are always sincere.

The worst enemies of the great men of the Revolution are those who, believing that they do them honor, put them in the category of ordinary great men. They were unconsciously sublime men, who won their pardon by their youth, their inexperience, their faith. I do not like to have titles of nobility conferred upon them. They go alone, like the executioner. With several illustrious exceptions, they have founded no families. As ancestors, they are concealed; no one claims them. People do not readily acknowledge fathers from whom they cannot take pattern. Above all, I do not like to have statues erected to thém. What a mistake! What a want of taste! Those men were not great! they were the artisans of a great hour. They must not be set up for imitation; those who should imitate them would be villains. We love them on condition that they shall be the last of their school. They succeeded in an incredible wager, against all probability. Where they found glory, their belated pupils would reap only ruin, disaster, malediction.

No one is to blame for centenaries; we cannot prevent the centuries from attaining their hundredth year. It is very annoying, nevertheless. Nothing is more unhealthy than to rhyme the life

of the present day upon the past, when the past is exceptional. Centenaries invoke apotheosis; that is too much. A solemn, general absolution, with panegyrics, nothing could be better; an embalmment, where the corpse is swathed in bands so that it cannot be resuscitated, would also give us infinite pleasure; let us, at least, restrain ourselves from everything which may lead people to think that such acts of juvenile imprudence and grandiose heedlessness can be repeated. It is the glory of a nation that it has in its history some of the tremendous apparitions which come only once: Jeanne d'Arc, Louis XIV., the Revolution, Napoleon; but it is also a danger. The essence of these apparitions is that they shall be unique. They are beautiful on condition that they are not renewed. The Revolution must remain an attack of sacred malady, as the ancients said. Fever may prove fruitful, when it is the indication of inward labor; but it must not continue or repeat itself; in that case, it is death. The Revolution is condemned, if it is proved that at the end of a hundred years it is all to be done over again, that it has to seek its path, and struggle unceasingly in conspiracies and anarchy.

You are young; you will behold the solution of this enigma, sir. Were the extraordinary men in whom we take a passionate interest right, or were they wrong? What remains of that unprecedented intoxication, reduced to the exact balance of profit

and loss? Will it be the fate of these great enthusiasts to remain eternally isolated, suspended in the void, victims of a noble folly? Or have they, on the whole, founded something and prepared the future? We do not know as yet. I think that we shall know in a few years. If, in ten or twenty years, France is prosperous and free, faithful to legality, surrounded by the sympathy of the liberal portions of the world, oh! then the cause of the Revolution is saved; the world will love it and enjoy its fruits, without having tasted its bitterness. But if, in ten or twenty years, France is still in a state of crisis, annihilated abroad, delivered over to the menaces of sects and the enterprises of vulgar popularity at home, oh! then it must be pronounced that our artistic enthusiasm has led us to commit a political fault, that those audacious innovators, for whom we have cherished a weakness, were absolutely in the wrong. In that case, the Revolution would be vanquished for more than a century. In war, a captain who is always beaten cannot be a great captain; in politics, a principle which, in the space of a hundred years, exhausts a nation, cannot be a true one.

Let us suspend our judgment. Our sons will have the reply to the question which holds us in a painful uncertainty. Certainly, history has more than once shown us a vanquished cause coming to life again at the end of many centuries, with the nation which had perished through representing it,

the victim of its superiority and of the services rendered by it to the common work of humanity. But our abnegation does not go so far as to sacrifice to a resurrection and to hypothetical apotheoses the existence of our dear country. The true way to honor the generous Utopias of the past is to show them realized and applicable. Who can say what the goal of humanity is? But, whether it be a question of humanity or of nature, the only organisms which leave behind a durable trace are those which, conceived in sorrow, grow great in strife, accommodate themselves to the necessities of their surroundings, and resist the decisive test of life.

You will aid us, sir, in defending the ancient house of our fathers, in preserving its plan, at least, in order that it may be rebuilt one day. You will aid us in maintaining the fundamental idea of this company—the principle of a literary nobility, a conception of the labor of the mind founded on respect. That, it is said, is no longer an attribute of our times. How many things, alas! has our century taken up again which it at first rejected? I fear that the work of the twentieth century will consist only in picking out of the waste basket a multitude of excellent ideas which the nineteenth century has foolishly consigned to it. . . . . But I do not wish to conclude this reunion with sad thoughts. This century, which proves its goodness in that one possesses every facility for speaking evil of it, is, after all, that in which

it has been the pleasantest to live. We have enjoyed the best that exists. If its close sometimes inspires us with anxiety, let us soar to that serene region where we can say to ourselves, without too many objections, "God does well that which he does." These armchairs are, after all, very comfortable places in which to await death patiently; life in them is fairly sweet. Let us enjoy what is still granted us. We have had our five acts, and, as Marcus Aurelius says: "He who dismisses us is without wrath." The ancients felt a sort of religious respect in the presence of the spectacle of a happy life. Yours, sir, appears to me to have been of this sort. Everything has smiled on you, and, without any sacrifice of your sincerity, you have contrived to unite, in common sympathy, the most opposite parties—the sympathies which are the least accustomed to find themselves together. This you owe to your happy genius; you owe it, also, to this gentle age of iron, to this excellent country in which we have the happiness to live. Our century has been good to us, sir. It has found in us that which it loves—possibly some of its defects. I do not know whether, in any other epoch, in any other country, we should have been able to put to so much profit the talent which has been confided to us. Poor country! It is because we love it that we are sometimes a little harsh toward it. You were quite right in saying that it will always be the principle of our hopes and of our joys!

LECTURE BEFORE THE ALLIANCE FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE, FEBRUARY 2, 1888.

Ladies and Gentlemen: When I received, a few days ago, the visit of the young and amiable deputies who came to invite me to take part in this festival, I felt great hesitation. This association is certainly one of the works to which I am most devoted. On the other hand, I had imposed upon myself this winter the absolute rule not to deliver any more lectures. Old age, which has so many ways of making itself felt, has chosen to try me at this moment by a great weakness of voice. I wished to refuse; then I thought of the extreme joy which I should feel at finding myself once more in the presence of a young and sympathetic audience; I accepted. You will be indulgent, ladies and gentlemen. It will be the last time, I assure you, that I shall commit the error of speaking in places so disproportioned to my present powers. Moreover, I shall be brief. I should like merely to exchange a few thoughts with you in regard to our dear French language; on its benefits, on the struggles which it is undergoing, on the efforts which these gentlemen are making, with such disinterested zeal, to assure it a future.

Yes, this is an excellent work, ladies and gentlemen. I have always adhered to it with fervor. I

defend it from the bottom of my heart. This work is good, in the first place, for our dear country, which we should love all the more, in proportion as it is lacerated, as it is misunderstood. It is good also for humanity. The preservation, the propagation of the French tongue are of importance to the general order of civilization. Some essential thing will be lacking to the world on the day when this great torch, clear and sparkling, shall cease to shine. Humanity would be lessened if this marvelous instrument of civilization were to disappear or to be diminished.

How many eternally good and true things have been first uttered in French, ladies and gentlemen, have been coined in French, have made their appearance in the world in French! How many liberal and just ideas have first found their formula, their veritable definition in French! How many good and beautiful things our language has said from its infant lispings in the twelfth century down to our own days! The abolition of slavery, the rights of man, equality, liberty, were proclaimed for the first time in French! It is in England, but in the French tongue that there bursts forth, in the the twelfth century, this first appeal to equality, in the mouth of the peasants:

We are men as they are:	Nous sommes hommes comme il sont:
We have all the members they have,	Tous membres avons comme ils ont,

And we have as great a body,	Et tout aussi grand corps avons,
And we can suffer as much ;	Et tout autant souffrir pouvons ;
We lack only force of heart.	Ne nous faut fors cœur seulement.

It is rather brutal ; equality is so sometimes. But would you have an expression of liberty less haughty? This is the way in which the king of France expresses himself in 1315. It was written in Latin, but assuredly thought in French. "As, according to the law of nature, every man should be born free [Franc]. . . ; we, considering that our realm is called and named the kingdom of the Francs, and wishing that the thing should agree with the name, have ordained and do ordain, etc." It appears that the fiscal laws had a good deal to do with what followed ; but never mind, the principle was a good one to utter, and it was well uttered.

Here now, is a bishop, privy councilor of Charles V., about the middle of the fourteenth century, pronouncing the prelude to 1789 : "Now the very noble line of the kings of France does not learn to tyrannize, and thus the Gallican people do not become accustomed to servile subjection, and hence, if the noble royal line of France departs from its first virtue, there is no doubt that it will lose its kingdom, and this will be translated into other hands."

That is tolerably swaggering, is it not? He was a Bishop of Lizieux; he might have been Bishop of Autun and celebrated, at another epoch, in the Champs-de-Mars, the mass of Liberty on the altar of country.

I should never make an end, ladies and gentlemen, were I to enumerate to you, century by century, all the phrases useful to humanity which have blossomed in our dear language. It is a truly liberal language. It has been good to the weak, the poor, let us add, to the intelligent man, to the witty man.

Everything may be abused, ladies and gentlemen. The most noble banners may be dragged through the mud. But the worst error that one can commit is to repulse truths, because they have been abused or because they have become commonplace. Commonplace! . . . that means that they are true; the greatest praise which an idea can have is that it has become commonplace. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. That is French, and that will make the circuit of the earth. An Oriental of my acquaintance almost brought about a revolution in certain parts of Persia with those three words. Some doctors of Kerbela decided that they were more beautiful than the Koran, and that there must have been a divine revelation in order that those words might be discovered. A charming traveling companion whom I had in Syria—allow me to name him: it was M. Lock-

roy—reaped unprecedented success of all sorts, in Lebanon, especially when he sung the "Marseillaise." Those fine people comprehended it instinctively. Everywhere that the French language goes, gentlemen, the Revolution will ride behind it. I know that one must not have too much of the Revolution; but there are a great many countries in the world where certain doses of it would still do good. Let us not force it; but let us allow liberty of action to our little clarion, which becomes, at certain times, we know not well how, the trumpet of Jericho.

I say that French has been a beneficent language to humanity. It has also been an amiable language. Oh, what sweet things have been said in French! There is no language from which one can detach prettier phrases. What fine and exquisite sentiments have found their expression in the harmonious idiom whose utterance Brunette Latini already considered so delectable in the thirteenth century! The question has been asked—in what language was the *Lancelot* which Francesca da Rimini read; for my part, I have no doubt on that point; it was in French. My learned colleagues, M. Gaston Paris and M. Paul Meyer, will correct me if I am wrong.

And what will this language, which has already said so many charming things, say in the future? One must be a prophet to know that. It will say tolerably diverse, but always liberal things.

French, ladies and gentlemen, will never be the language of the absurd, neither will it ever be a reactionary language. I cannot imagine a serious reaction having for organ the French tongue. This good Gallican people, as Oresmus says, will never entangle itself very deeply in that quarter. Look at M. de Maistre, M. Chateaubriand ; oh, such inquisitors would not alarm me much ! And M. de Montalembert ! . . . . A matter for laughter ! M. de Falloux ! . . . . A little more serious. The question is to know whether the reactionary has wit. If he has, he halts very promptly. I fear only the reactionary without wit ; but that man does not speak French ; we need not occupy ourselves with him.

A fact which is, with justice, regarded as very significant, is the general sentiment of retrograde parties, throughout the whole world, for French. They are afraid of it ; they barricade themselves against it. One would say that this language carries the pest with it—the pest according to the reactionaries, of course. Proceed, proceed, nevertheless. Poor France ! her hour will come yet. Who knows whether the propositions of peace and of liberty which shall withdraw Europe from the frightful state of hatred and of military preparations in which she lies, will not be formulated in French ?

That is why French may really be called a classic language, an instrument of culture and of civili-

zation for all. This language improves ; it is a school ; it has naturalness, good nature, it knows how to laugh, it carries with it an amiable skepticism, mingled with kindness—skepticism without kindness is a very bad thing. Fanaticism is impossible in French. I have a horror of fanaticism, especially of Mussulman fanaticism ; well ! this great scourge will cease through French. No Mussulman who knows French will ever be a dangerous Mussulman. It is an excellent language in which to doubt ; now, in the future, doubt will, perhaps, be a very necessary thing. Can you imagine Montaigne, Pascal, Molière, Voltaire, otherwise than in French ? Ah ! ladies and gentlemen, what joy will leave the world on the day when French leaves it ! Preserve it, preserve it. By the side of the fanatic races, there are melancholy races. Teach them also French. I am thinking now, in particular, of our unhappy brothers, the Slavs. They have suffered so much for centuries, that they must be kept, above all things, from loving nothingness. The French language and French wine will have a humanitarian rôle to play there. French rejoices ; its favorite locutions imply a gay sentiment of life, the idea, that, at bottom, nothing is very serious, and that one enters into the intentions of the Eternal by a little irony. The great inferiority of the barbarian—of the Oriental, in particular—is that he does not know how to laugh. Teach all nations to laugh in

French. That is the most philosophical thing in the world, and the healthiest. French songs are good also. In former days I calumniated the god of the minstrels ; heavens ! how wrong I was ! He is a god who is never malicious, who has never done any evil. Who is it that said that God takes more pleasure in the oaths of a French soldier than in the prayers of such and such a Puritan sect ? One enters, through gayety, into the profoundest views of Providence. It is good policy to labor to render man content. It is the only means of preventing his being very wicked.

Our Gallic race has always possessed an immense superiority in this respect. I often reflect that, during that somber first half of the Middle Ages, when all joy of the real seemed lost, the Burgundian or Aquitanian peasant continued to drink his wine and to sing his joyous melodies, without troubling himself over the grand, supernatural dream which bewitched the rest of the world.

He did not contradict the universal belief ; but he did not allow himself to be overwhelmed by it. What I love most in Gregory of Tours is the narrative of the manner in which the bourgeois of Orleans induced Gontran to come and taste with them the sweetness of city life. At the end of a few days, Gontran found that this manner of life was far superior to the profound melancholy of a barbarian's life. That good Caribert, King of Paris, was caught in the same way.

He died young through having loved too much the Parisian women of his day. Our language, our customs, our wines, our songs, have always exercised in the world an apostleship of good humor and humanity.

You have been all the more in right, gentlemen, in constituting yourselves the defenders of our dear language, since it has always defended itself very badly. It has always been one of the glories of France, that she has never done violence to the linguistic conscience of anyone. She has never taken any coercive measures in the matter of languages. Language is a religion, in its own way. To persecute a person for his language is as bad as to persecute him for his religion. As it often happens, we have been punished for our delicacy. A wind, so little liberal in its nature, has blown over the world that that which men should have praised has almost been converted into an argument against us. They have taken from us with less scruple a country, "which," they said, "we have not understood how to assimilate." What would you have? The world loves the strong. Let us allow it to take its course; then it will soon change its fashion. Let us wait: we shall soon find that we were in the right. I have always regarded as very beautiful the reply of Abraham to his ally, the King of Sodom: *Da mihi animas; cætera tolle tibi*—Give me the souls; take thou the rest!

The souls have remained faithful to us, gentlemen. But sympathetic propaganda is permitted to us in exactly the same proportion that brutal propaganda is forbidden to us. Your schools are a gratuitous gift, which forces no one. You offer something excellent; each person is free to accept or reject. You obtain your results by purely pacific means. The perusal of your Bulletins is delicious and touching. What youth, what devotion! What courage in your schoolmasters and mistresses! I love those old Canadians who travel a hundred leagues on horseback, to hear French spoken. I love those religious heroes who maintain, in the midst of barbarous lands, a tradition of honesty, of uprightness, of cordiality. Thanks to your excellent proceedings people will not only learn French, but they will love it. For those poor, disinherited races, all good things have come with it. It will have been the bearer of all good news, liberty, contentment, the joy of living. Let all refer the commencement of all their joys to the day when they learned French.

And let not the objection be raised that French is an aristocratic language, of a culture too refined for the barbarian, lace rather than homespun. Oh! it matters not, gentlemen. I will even say: so much the better. Popular things are, almost always, very aristocratic things. One must never serve the people with anything that is not very noble. Latin, the language which has conquered

most barbarians, is the infinitely delicate language of poets, almost of decadents, as it is expressed to-day. In the matter of a language, number is necessary; everything counts. In order that some may speak well it is necessary that some should speak ill. Long life to the barbarians, gentlemen! It is through them that we live and continue.

With a profound intuition of history, you have perceived all this. The barbarian belongs to the first person who captures him. The seed which you are sowing will bear fruit for centuries. Thanks, in the name of France, gentlemen. Thanks in the name of us writers, who will, perhaps, be indebted to you that some page of our books, which has, by chance, escaped destruction, will be read by the erudite a thousand years hence. Thanks in the name of the French Academy, to whom you will give the means of finishing its historical Dictionary; twelve hundred years are required for that, according to the most moderate computation; we owe them to you. Thanks for all the world. Hold, gentlemen, there is one day, when the use of French will be very necessary; it is the day of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Prolong the life of French until the Last Judgment. I assure you that, if German is spoken on that day, there will be errors and confusion without number. All the discoveries, for example, will turn out to have been made by the Germans. Gentlemen, I

beg of you, arrange it so that German shall not be spoken in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

My learned colleague, M. Gaston Paris, communicated to me yesterday, on this subject, a passage from a poet of Champagne of the twelfth century, which ought to reassure us. According to this author, French is the language of God himself :

> C'est ci l que Dieu s'entent ançois,
> Qu'il le fist et bel et légier.
>
> 'Tis that which God understands himself,
> He made it beautiful and light.

This, certainly is a fine privilege. For my part, gentlemen, I make a great point of your confirming it ; I will tell you why. You listen to me with so much favor, ladies and gentlemen, that I will confide to you a dream in which I often indulge. I receive so many letters which announce to me my eternal damnation that I have finally come to a conclusion about it. It will not be very just ; but I much prefer hell, after all, to annihilation. I am persuaded that I shall succeed in putting the situation to good use, and I think that, if I have only the good God to deal with, I shall manage to touch him. There are theologians who concede a mitigation in the pains of the damned. Well, in my sleepless nights, I amuse myself by composing petitions, which I suppose addressed to the Eternal from the remotest depths of hell. I almost always try to prove to him that he is a little the cause of

our perdition, and that there are things which he should have made clearer. Among these petitions there are some tolerably piquant specimens, which would make the Eternal smile, I think. But it is plain that they will lose all their salt if I am obliged to translate them into German. Preserve me from that misfortune, gentlemen. I depend on you to make French the language of eternal life. Otherwise, I shall be lost.

Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, for having interrupted your pleasures with such black thoughts. Let me thank you for the extreme joy which you have given me by your sympathetic attention, and your cordial welcome.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT MONTMORENCY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE REMOVAL OF THE ASHES OF MICKIEWICZ, JUNE 29, 1890.

Gentlemen: The College of France thanks you for having been so good as to associate me with your noble thought to return to his native land the remains of an eminent man whom Poland had lent to us, and whom she takes back to-day; that is justice. Our college, founded to interrogate nature, and to explain, by languages and literatures, the free genius of peoples, is like a common land for souls, where all meet. Bodies do not belong

to us. Take then, these remains, which genius illuminated. Adam Mickiewicz does not quit us entirely. We shall have his spirit, his memory. Our ancient halls will preserve the distant echo of his voice. Some survivors of those heroic times can still tell us how much intoxication, magic, enchanting power, his words possessed. Associated in a glorious trinity with two other names which are dear to us—those of Michelet and Quinet—the name of Mickiewicz has become for us a creed, an inseparable part of our ancient glories and our ancient joys.

This is because your compatriot, gentlemen, had the capital quality by which a man dominates his century—sincerity, personal enthusiasm, absence of self-love, creating a state of soul in which he does not do, or does not say, or does not write that which he wishes, but in which he does, says, or writes that which is dictated to him by a genius placed outside of him. This genius is, almost always, the century, eternally ill, which desires that its wounds shall be caressed; that its fever shall be calmed with sonorous words. It is far more, even, the race, the interior voice of ancestors and the man's blood. Mickiewicz had these two great sources of inspiration. When Madame Sand, like a true sister, comprehended his genius at the first word, she perceived that that heart had felt all our wounds; that our convulsions had made it palpitate. The glory of our century lies in having

wished to realize the impossible; to solve the insoluble. Glory to it! The men of action who shall attempt to realize the immensity of these programmes will all be impotent; the men of reason will end only in contradictions. The poet who never doubts, who after each defeat sets to work more ardently and more vigorously than ever, is never confounded. Such was Mickiewicz. He possessed within himself sources of infinite resurrections. He endured the most cruel anguishes, but never that of despair; his imperturbable faith in the future sprang from a sort of profound instinct—from something which is in us, and which speaks to us more loudly than the sad reality. I mean the spirit of the past, solidarity with that which does not die. The cheerful men are those in whom is thus an incarnated form of the universal conscience, who accomplish their human destiny as the ant toils, as the bee makes its honey.

Sprung from that family of the Aryan race which has been most conservative of primitive gifts—from that Lithuania which, by its language, its serenity, its moral seriousness, represents best to us our grave and honest ancestors—Mickiewicz was related to the ancient centuries by bonds of secret communication which made of him a seer into the past. And he was, at the same time, a seer into the future. He believed in his race; but he believed, above all, in the divine spirit which ani-

mates all that which bears within it the breath of life, and, athwart all clouds, he beheld a brilliant future in which poor humanity should receive consolation for its sufferings. This great idealist was a great patriot, but he was, above all, a believer. And as the real reason for belief in immortality is furnished by the martyrs, his prophetic imagination, inspired by the beating of his own heart, persuaded him that it is not in vain that humanity has toiled so much, and that its victims have suffered so much.

This is why enlightened French society welcomed so gladly this great and noble spirit, associated him with all that it held dearest, made him spontaneously, and almost without consulting him, member of a triumvirate for liberty and against religion badly understood. On the day when the Slavic genius had conquered its place among the national geniuses which are studied in a scientific manner, and when the creation of a professorship of Slavic languages and literatures was decided upon, a highly liberal thought occurred to those who then directed the intellectual affairs of France, and this was to charge Mickiewicz with this instruction. The poet, the man who represents the soul of a people, who possesses its legends, who has the intuition of its origins, appeared preferable for the profound analysis of a race to the learned man of the study who works only with books. They were right. The living meadow, with its

flowers, is superior to the dried herbarium, which offers only a pale memory of life. The volumes containing M. Mickiewicz's first course of lectures, constitute a treasure of original information upon the ancient history of the Slav race, which the professor explained like a learned man and felt like a man of the people. He was accused of transgressing his programme. Ah! how difficult it is to confine one's self to a limited programme when one is intoxicated with the infinite! Such as he was, with his bold divinations, his overflowing aspirations, his noble illusions of a prophet, we are proud of him, and although the decree of his official election was deferred through scruples of policy, we have inscribed his name on the tablets of marble which contain the names of our seniors. He had in his favor the best of decrees, that which is countersigned by the enthusiasm of the people. You are about to transport him from the hospitable soil where he has reposed for five-and-thirty years to your Saint Denis, in the vaults of Wawel, where repose your ancient sovereigns. There he will lie by the side of Kosciusko and Poniatowski, the only members of that noble assembly who were not kings. By the side of those who have wielded the sword you have desired to prepare a place for the inspired poet, who has lent a voice to yours trong and ardent genius, to your exquisite legends, to all which transports and consoles you, which makes you smile and weep. Thereby you give a great lesson to idealism; you proclaim that a nation is a spiritual

thing, that it possesses a soul which is not conquered with the means wherewith the body is conquered.

Great and illustrious colleague, remember France; from the royal tomb which the admiration of your compatriots has prepared for you, remember France. Poor France! She does not forget, be assured. That which she has loved once she loves forever. That which she has applauded in your words, she will applaud again. The rostrum which she has offered to you, she will offer again more freely. You would hesitate to recall there so often memories of victory, but you would find heartfelt words wherewith to teach the austere duties of the vanquished. Go to the glory which you have merited; return to the homage of the people, to that country which you have loved so much. We restrict our ambition to a single point, that it may be stated on your tomb that you were one of us; that people may know, in the Poland of the future, that, in the days of trial, there was a liberal France to receive you, to applaud you, to love you.

VICTOR HUGO.

M. VICTOR HUGO was one of the proofs of the unity of our French conscience. The admiration which surrounded his last years has demonstrated that there are still points upon which we are in ac-

cord. Without distinction of classes, of parties, of sects, of literary opinions, the public, for the last few days, has hung suspended on the heartbreaking narrative of his death-agony ; and now there is no one who does not feel a great void at the heart of the country. He was an essential member of the Church in the communion of which we live ; one would say that the spire of that ancient cathedral had crumbled with that noble existence which has borne the highest, in our century, the banner of the ideal.

M. Victor Hugo was a very great man ; he was, above all, an extraordinary man, a unique man. He seems to have been created by a special nominating decree of the Eternal. All the categories of literary history were thrown into confusion in him. That criticism which shall, one day, seek to disentangle his origins, will find itself in the presence of the most complicated problem. Was he French, German, Spanish ? He was all this and something more. His genius is above all distinctions of race ; none of the families into which the human race is divided, physically and morally, can claim him.

Is he a spiritualist ? Is he a materialist ? I do not know. On the one hand, he does not know what abstraction is ; his principal, I may say his sole, cult, is for two or three enormous realities, such as Paris, Napoleon, the people. On souls, he held the ideas of Tertullian ; he thinks he sees them, he touches them ; his immortality is only the

immortality of the head. He is highly idealistic, withal. For him, the idea penetrates matter and constitutes its reason for existence. His God is not the hidden God of Spinoza, a stranger to the development of the universe; he is a God to whom it may be useless to pray, but whom he adored with a sort of trembling. He is the Abyss of the Gnostics. His life was passed under the powerful obsession of a living infinity, which embraced him, overflowed upon him from all directions, and in the bosom of which he found it sweet to lose himself and enter into delirium.

That lofty philosophy which was the daily occupation of the long hours that he passed alone with himself is the secret of his genius. For him the world is like a diamond with a thousand facets, sparkling with internal fires, suspended in a night without bounds. He desires to express that which he sees and feels; materially he cannot. The tranquil state of the poet's soul, which believes that it holds the infinite, or which easily resigns itself to its impotence, is not his. He persists, he stammers, he hardens himself against the impossible; he does not consent to hold his peace; like the Hebrew prophet, he likes to say: *Domine, nescio loqui* —Lord, I know not how to speak. His prodigious reason completes what his imagination does not perceive. Often above humanity, he is sometimes below it. Like a Cyclops, hardly disengaged from matter, he possesses the secrets of a lost

world. His immense work is the mirage of a universe which no eye shall behold again.

His defects were thus necessary defects; he could not have existed without them; they were the defects of an unconscious force of nature, acting through the effect of an inward tension. He was born to be the sonorous clarion which throws down walls of cities which have waxed old. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had excelled in a limited conception of the human mind. The great writers of those epochs wished to see only the finished; things appeared to them in their definitive state, they never beheld them in the process of creation. The infinite development escaped them. The mysteries of origins, the wonders of instinct, the genius of crowds, spontaneity under all forms, were beyond them. At the beginning of our century the evil had reached its height. The physical contemplation of the universe wrought miracles: "La Méchanique Céleste" of Laplace, and "La Méchanique Analytique" of Lagrange, composed separately, arrived at an embrace, like two hemispheres combined expressly to be united! But the moral contemplation of the universe, that is to say, literature, had become a puerile game—something empty, factitious, scanty.

M. Victor Hugo was the most illustrious among those who undertook to lead back this degraded literature to lofty inspirations. He was filled with a truly poetical breath; with him, everything is

germ and vigorous with life. A singular discovery coincides with that of the new spirit; it is that the French language, which might seem no longer good for anything but to rhyme witty or amiable little verses, suddenly finds itself vibrating, sonorous, full of brilliancy. The poet, who has just opened to imagination and sentiment fresh paths, reveals to French poetry its harmony. That which was only a great bell of lead becomes in his hands a fine, small bell of steel.

The battle was won. Who, to-day, would wish to demand of the general an account of the maneuvers which he employed, of the sacrifices which were the conditions of success? The general is obliged to be an egotist. The army is he; and personality, to be condemned in other men, is imposed upon him. M. Hugo had become a creed, a principle, an affirmation—the affirmation of idealism and of free art. He owed himself to his own religion; he was like a god who should be, at the same time, a priest to himself. His strong and lofty nature lent itself to such a part, which would have been unsupportable for any other. He was the least free of men, and that did not weigh upon him. A great instinct made its way to the light through him. He was like a spring of the spiritual world. He had not the time to have taste, and, moreover, that would have served him but little. His policy must be that which best suited his battle. It was, in reality, subordinated to his

great literary strategies, and was sometimes forced to suffer from them, like everything of the first order which it reduced to the second rank and which it sacrificed to a preferred goal.

In proportion as he advanced in life, the grand ideal which has always filled him was expanded, purified. He was more and more seized with pity for the thousands of beings whom nature immolates to the great things which she makes. Eternal honor of our race! Starting from the two opposite poles, M. Hugo and Voltaire unite in the love of justice and of humanity. In 1878 ancient literary antipathies subsided: the cold tragedies of the eighteenth century were forgotten; Victor Hugo awarded to his adversary the apotheosis, certainly not for his literary baggage, but in spite of his literary baggage. Liberalism is the national work of France; one is judged, in history, according to the measure of services which one has rendered to it.

What will happen in 1985 when the centenary of M. Victor Hugo will be celebrated in its turn? Who shall dare to predict, in the face of the obscurities of a future which appears to us closed on all sides? One thing alone is very probable. That which has remained of Voltaire will remain of M. Hugo. Voltaire, in the name of an admirable good sense, proclaims that men blaspheme God when they think to serve his cause by preaching hatred. M. Hugo, in the name of a grandiose instinct, proclaims a father of beings, in whom all beings are brothers. The priests will be absent

from M. Hugo's funeral. That is loyal; it would have been better had matters passed off with the same decorum at the funeral of Voltaire. For my part, had I the right to wear the gown and band of any religion, and were I called upon to pronounce the last farewell to the dead, this is what I would say, as I poured a few grains of incense upon the sacred flames.

"Brothers and sisters, send up with this incense your best prayers, in memory of those great men whom the purified manner in which they regarded divine things has not permitted to desire ordinary songs and chants. So strong an ideal filled their soul that they affirmed the immortality of the ideal itself. They believed so energetically in the true, in the good, in justice, that they conceived these apparent abstractions as a real and supreme existence. Their language on this point was that of the most simple among you. They took pleasure in the words which you employ; they avoided the mistake of many subtle minds which, in order not to speak like the credulous centuries, wear themselves out in seeking synonyms of God."

GEORGE SAND.

DURING the days which preceded her death, Madame Sand had written for the *Temps*, in relation to my "Philosophical Dialogues," an article which the director of the *Temps* was so kind as to

communicate to me. I thanked him for it in the following letter :

PARIS, June 11, 1876.

My Dear Friend: I send you back, not without some tears, the sheets which you have permitted me to read. I am touched to the bottom of my heart at having been the last to cause vibration in that sonorous soul, which was like the æolian harp of our epoch. Her death appears to me a loss to humanity ; henceforth, something will be lacking to our concert ; a cord has been broken in the lyre of the century. She possessed the divine talent of bestowing wings on everything, of making art with the idea which, to others, remained rough and formless. She drew charming pages from people who have never written a single good page ; for an instrument of infinite sensibility lay within her ; moved by everything that was original and true, responding by the wealth of her inner being to all impressions from without, she transformed and rendered everything into infinite harmonies. She gave life to the aspirations of those who felt but who could not create. She was the inspired poet who clothed with a body our hopes, our plaints, our faults, our groans.

This admirable gift of understanding and expressing everything was the source of her kindness. It is the characteristic of great souls that they are incapable of hatred. They see good everywhere and they love good in everything. "I had no

other enemies than those of the state," said a great man in politics. We have no other enemies than those of the ideal ; now, if we except a few souls which have been unfortunately born, the ideal has no enemies in reality ; it has its more or less imperfect adorers. Madame Sand has sometimes been reproached for that indulgence which, it was said, prevented her feeling sufficient indignation against evil, left her disarmed in the presence of her enemies, made her forget quickly outrage and calumny. It was because she had, in fact, a very different work to do from occupying her mind with such petty thoughts. Hate the foolish—great Heavens !—reply to all the absurdities, wear out her life in a fruitless struggle, place herself at the mercy of her insulters by giving them the right to think that they can wound her—what madness, when the world is so vast, when the universe contains so many secrets to be divined, so many charming things to contemplate ! Madame Sand had not the ordinary defect of literary people. She knew no self-love. Her life, passed, in spite of appearances to the contrary, in a profound peace, in noble disdain of plebeian judgments, was, throughout, an ardent seeking after the forms under which it is permitted us to admire the infinite.

She took no precautions against pharisees. She did not provoke them, but she never thought of them. Her candor, her artlessness permitted her to indulge in miracles of disdain and of admirable

serenity. Yesterday, an hour before her funeral, some literary reticences, dominated by respect, could be expressed among those whom a desire to render her homage had assembled in her park. A nightingale suddenly began to sing in a voice so sweet that many said: "Ah! that is the speech which is really in place here; her eulogium is that which flows from the breast swelling with the love of pure and simple beings." Her funeral was what it should have been. She reposes in the corner of a rustic cemetery, beneath a fine green cypress. All the inhabitants of the country round about were present; all wept. With much tact, it had been felt that the ideas of the simple women who came to pray for her, hooded, chaplet in hand, must not be troubled. That coffin, covered with flowers, borne by peasants, must traverse the church. For my own part, I should have regretted to pass, without entering, that porch sheltered by great trees; I should have regretted the absence of the old chanter who intoned the psalms without understanding them, and of the choir boy who carried the holy water with an air of abstraction. Oh! what a fine legend will be built thereon by the people and the Church, those eternal creators of myth, more true than the truth! The simple who imagine that she had errors to retract, will make out that she was converted. They will not be able to make up their minds to damn so great a soul. The first time that I saw a portrait

of Madame Sand, was in Brittany, in the year 1836 or 1837 (I was fifteen years of age) ; the priests exhibited it with horror ; it was a lithograph representing a tall woman, clad in black, trampling under foot a crucifix. How quickly the Church pardons ! In ten years she will be saved. Thousands more will peruse her, saying, to excuse their hardihood : "It is possible that she erred ; but she made a good end."

Very few will be able to understand such sincerity, such a complete absence of declamation, such a perfect horror of posing and phrase-making, so much innocence of mind. Genius plays with error as children play with serpents ; they are not bitten. Madame Sand traversed all dreams ; she smiled on all, believed for a moment in all ; her practical judgment was sometimes led astray ; but, as an artist, she never made a mistake. Her works are really the echo of our century. She will be loved, she will be sought, when this poor nineteenth century which we calumniate, but which will one day be pardoned much, shall be no more. George Sand will come to life again as our interpreter. The century has not received a wound at which her heart has not bled, it has not suffered a malady which has not wrung from her harmonious tears. Her books bear promises of immortality because they will be forever the testimony of that which we have desired, thought, felt, suffered.

Give quickly to your readers these fine pages, the

last, it would seem, that she wrote before being struck down by the pains of death, and believe in my sincere affection.

M. COUSIN.

My learned colleague, M. Janet, has lately published a volume filled with facts and judicious remarks, under the title: "Victor Cousin and his Works."* M. Janet has decided that the moment has arrived for setting forth with impartiality the work of philosophical restoration attempted by M. Cousin at the beginning of this century. He has fulfilled his task like a friend; but friendship has not blinded him. Disparagement, after all, leads to the commission of as many errors as good will. An excellent principle in literary history is, to distrust all testimony, but, in the end, to believe friends rather than enemies.

The oblivion which, in less than twenty years, has overtaken M. Cousin's work, is singular. This oblivion is unjust; nevertheless, it can be explained on many grounds. It is not good for philosophy to win too complete victories. The Revolution of 1830 was more fatal to M. Cousin than the narrow spirit of the Restoration had been. Once free, or, to express it more accurately, being obliged to translate into practice that which had been hitherto only a theory for him, he was forced to enter into

* Paris, Calmann Lévy.

the order of compromises and concessions ; he became an administrator of philosophy rather than a philosopher. The very sincere desire to found a philosophy which might be taught in the schools, and to replace the wretched manuals which had reigned hitherto, debased his genius. He fell into the chimera of a state philosophy, into the dream of a lay catechism, implying a double erroneous assumption ; the first that freethinkers would be content with it, the second, that it would enchant the Catholics. Now, neither the freethinkers nor the Catholics lent themselves to this misapprehension. M. Cousin's condescension was wasted. His marvelous talent never abandoned him, but, by dint of seeing him preserve, for a period of nearly forty years, a prudent silence upon the problems which constitute the very essence of philosophy, people became unaccustomed to regard him as a philosopher ; the exquisite writer was prejudicial to the thinker ; he seemed to content himself so easily with official solutions that people began to doubt whether the thirst of the true had ever been an imperious necessity with him.

And nevertheless, such were the complexity and hidden resources of his rich nature that the thinker had very readily existed in him, before the orthodox dogmatist. M. Janet excels in demonstrating this ; this constitutes the new and finely observed side of his book. There were two phases in the philosophical life of M. Cousin. The supreme end

of existence did not always consist, for him, in drawing up, in correct style, programmes appropriate to the use of Lyceums. At the origin of all this, there was a mind singularly open to all the sounds from without ; an eloquent and profound interpreter of all that had agitated the European conscience, a young enthusiast, intoxicated in his day with the ideal and with lofty speculation. His defects, then, are those of his time—a time preoccupied to excess with eloquence, with poetry, with worldly success ; —these are, above all, the defects of his masters, the Germans. The importance which he attributes to subjective idealism is exaggerated ; the attention devoted to the scientific knowledge of the universe is insufficient. But, athwart a host of defects, what a lofty sentiment of the infinite ! what a just view of the spontaneous and the unconscious ! what a religious accent, unheard since Malebranche, when he speaks of reason ! How well one understands the traces which men like Jouffroy retained of this first instruction ! I made acquaintance with the course of 1818 in its first edition, that of M. Adolphe Garnier, which is the genuine one, under the shadows of Issy, about 1842. The impression which it made upon me was extremely profound ; I knew those winged phrases by heart. I dreamed of them. I am conscious that many of the outlines of my brain are derived from that source, and that is why, without ever having belonged to M. Cousin's school, I have always enter-

tained for him the most respectful and the most deferential feelings. He has been not one of the fathers, but one of the exciters of my brain. Hence M. Janet is right in protesting against a sort of ingratitude to which generations are subject when they enjoy full liberty on entering life. They forget how much courage has been required to lift a world of ignorance and prejudices; they treat as weakness what was merely prudence; they almost reproach Galileo and Descartes for not having smashed the windows of the Inquisition and the Sorbonne. The youth of our day can hardly understand any longer, in particular, what the years of reaction which followed 1848 were like—years when the enemies of the human mind reigned as masters. I knew M. Cousin about that epoch. Certainly, the effect which he then produced upon me was far less than that which I had felt at Issy when listening to the distant echo of his first word. I was more formed, less susceptible to captivation, and—he had lost the greater part of his fascinations. But what charm still! what gayety! what love of work! what respect for the language, and what conscientiousness in research! I loved him twice, in a manner, and the man I went to salute at the Sorbonne was not exactly the same who had troubled and enchanted me at Issy. But I always found him good, amiable, living exclusively the life of the spirit, sincerely liberal. Two classes of persons only could be severe toward him: in the first

place, the disciples whom he had enlisted, and who imagined that they could reconquer their independence by ingratitude; then the rather heavy-witted, who took him quite seriously, and did not admit a grain of irony as one of his essential elements.

In short, Victor Cousin was one of the most attractive personalities of the nineteenth century. I do not know whether he will hold a very great place in the critical history of philosophy conceived on the plan of Brucker or Tennemann; but certainly he will fill a curious chapter of the French spirit at one of its most brilliant moments. It is a fact very honorable for the half-forgotten master that the first effort at reaction in his favor should come from so sincere a mind, and one so devoted to the truth, as M. Janet. Happy is he who is still sufficiently alive twenty years after his death to find so clever and so convinced an apologist.

MADAME HORTENSE CORNU.

A WEEK ago,* a few friends were assembled in the little church of Longport, near Montlhéry, to pay the last respects to a woman who will leave a deep impression on all who knew her. Madame Hortense Cornu will occupy an important place in the history of our times, and, nevertheless, it has

* June 10, 1875.

been granted to only a very small number to appreciate that rare mind, that noble heart, that philosophical soul, that rich nature in which the most varied gifts were united without contradiction. The seclusion in which she had lived for the last five years had caused her to be forgotten ; the ingratitude of some, the injustice of others had created a void about her ; she almost rejoiced in it ; she was too philosophical to seek, with death so near, any consolations save the memory of the good which she had done.

Hortense Albin Lacroix was born in Paris, on the 8th of April, 1809. Her mother was attached to the service of Queen Hortense. Her fate was full of peculiarities. One year previously, almost to a day, he who was destined to become the Emperor Napoleon III. was born in the same house. The two children grew up together and, dating from 1815, became inseparable, received the same education. That which was lacking in this education was not knowledge on the part of the masters ; it was coherence, oversight, attention on the part of the parents and preceptors. Louis Napoleon was the same then that he was in later years ; a nature profound, dreamy, embarrassed, but strong and obstinate, incapable of being turned aside from his fixed idea, incapable, also, of acquiring from without that which the sluggish and obscure movement of his own brain did not lead him to see himself. He possessed the inflexible will of the believer, the

awkwardness of a man held by an evil spirit ; his absolute lack of facility predestined him to embrace energetically whatever he understood, but also never to understand a mass of things. The lessons which he received as a child were nearly useless to him ; the master did not consider it his duty to have recourse to long and patient methods to make his teaching penetrate a mind which was closed only in appearance, but into which one could enter only after having long sought the approaches.

It was quite otherwise with the little girl of twelve or thirteen years who listened beside him. There was no necessity for aiding her to understand ; the lessons were, in reality, for her. The house was vast, sad, solitary. Shut up alone, almost all day long, in a great schoolroom, the two children brought themselves up as best they might. In one hour Hortense had scampered through her task and that of her fellow-student, and the rest of the time was spent in exercises of strategy, for which the school books suffered. The tables, the chairs, the benches, became improvised fortresses ; dictionaries served as projectiles, and would to heaven that the Prince had always confined himself to such inoffensive artillery as that !

The good and affectionate nature of Prince Napoleon could not fail to attach to him the child who then shared his sort of seclusion. Hortense

Lacroix had precisely that which he lacked—movement, initiative, life. Through her, the external universe made its way to him. Shut up, after the manner of a somnambulist, in a fantastic world, haunted even then by that sort of hallucination of the Napoleonic specter, which, like the ghost in Hamlet, was destined to lead him to the end of the narrow path beyond which there lies nothing but the abyss, the timid, headstrong, taciturn child had found a sister in this little comrade, who dared everything with him, astonished him, roused him, shook him up incessantly, giving him his education all by herself and serving as interpreter between him and the world of reality. Hortense Lacroix, at that age, was as intelligent as she ever was ; reason did not yet regulate in her that touch of the witty, revolutionary Paris street-Arab who divines what he has not yet learned. This charming little Gavroche, with her delicate features, was in every respect the contrary of the grave, gloomy, embarrassed child, who could not express his thoughts, but whose inward characteristics and destiny were already fixed in an irrevocable manner.

Although overthrown, the Bonaparte family kept up their relations with most of the reigning houses of Germany. Hortense Lacroix was early known to them, and singularly appreciated by them ; the Grand-Duchess Stéphanie of Baden, in particular, cherished a lively affection for her.

Germany was then at its moment of greatest philosophical and literary splendor. That beautiful and intelligent manner of understanding the culture of the human mind left upon her a profound impression; but she speedily descried its gaps and limits. Italy was what enchanted her most of all; she was thoroughly intoxicated by it; the taste for art awoke vigorously in her, and she conceived at that time, as the principal occupation of her life, a history of modern art, even to its most obscure pages. Her erudition rendered her perfectly fitted for this. The pages which she published on Italian art in the eighteenth volume of M. Didot's "Encyclopédie Moderne," under the pseudonym of Sébastien Albin, have something very just and solid about them. She also planned some studies in iconography, in particular a "history of the crucifix," which, however, I believe she never executed.

Two youthful pupils of M. Ingres, who were then in Rome and frequented the palace inhabited by the Bonaparte family, knew her, and conceived for her the most lively attachment. Gleyre was her lifelong friend; Sébastian Cornu married her. M. Cornu possessed precisely what was required for Hortense's happiness. This very conscientious and decisive artist was, at the same time, the gentlest and best of men. By his side, Hortense exercised freely her thoroughly masculine activity, without this tranquil, almost mystic friend

after the manner of Flandrin, ever once being troubled by a vicinity, exquisite, no doubt, but which did not create precisely a desert around him.

The fact is that no woman ever lived the elevated parts of the life of her century with so much ardor as Madame Cornu. Nothing escaped her. Her taste for conversation and discussion had led her to make acquaintance with all that was then in agitation in Italy and elsewhere. What her mind penetrated quickly, her heart embraced with warmth. She thought like a man and felt like a woman. Although extremely German in the turn of her intelligence, although half Italian by admiration and love of an unequaled past, she was essentially French in spirit. Her patriotism was the purest, the most disinterested, the most sincere that I have ever known. Her dream was a France, the center of the aspirations of the whole world. Her religion was the religion of France; she was faithful to her, even when she perceived her passing errors and illusions.

Now, at that epoch, France really had a religion—it was liberalism, the taste for the noble development of humanity, esteem and sympathy for all that bears the features of a man, sympathy for all that is weak, persecuted, for all that seeks to rise, to free itself. Stupid that we are we did not dream that those whom our country aided most to escape from the other world would soon

say to her, like the scoffers of Calvary: "He has saved others, himself he cannot save. Let him now descend if he can!" Madame Cornu, indifferent to the ingratitude which concerned only herself, but less indulgent to ingratitude toward others, could not recall without bitterness how many recent upstarts she had formerly seen suppliant and happy at receiving favors. Will these experiences correct us, and cause us to renounce the old virtues of whose habit we shall succeed in breaking the world? It is hardly probable. We are too old to follow the maxims which the new leaders of fashion seem to desire to inaugurate. If the final expression of wisdom and progress in setting the rights of man and the rights of people at defiance; in treating as chimerical all chivalry, all generosity, all gratitude between nations; in substituting for our clear and simple notion of liberty I know not what subtleties by means of which liberty is proved to consist in being as much governed as possible, for one's own good, yes, we prefer to be among the laggards rather than to serve such progress as that. Let us learn to wait; some day we shall be regretted. The world has preferred a master to a capricious mistress, who sometimes tormented it. Let it earn its experience. But let us remain obstinately liberal, even toward those who are not so themselves; let us say, like Corneille's *Pauline:*

My duty does not depend upon his ;
Let him fail, if he will ; I must still do mine.

Madame Cornu had committed all the noble errors of the days when she was young. She loved Italy, she loved Poland ; she had an aversion for what is strong, and a taste for the weak, even perceiving always in that very weakness a presumption of sound right. That is why she was generally on the side of those who conspired ; she sympathized with the revolutionists of all lands ; he who hazarded his life for his cause was dear to her from that fact alone. In France, her relations were with the Republican party. At the epoch of her life which we have now reached, these sentiments had not created the slightest disagreement between her and the friend of her childhood. This was the time when the latter wrote : "What we require in France is a government in harmony with our needs, our nature. Our needs are equality and liberty ; our nature is to be the ardent promoters of civilization." During his imprisonment at Ham, Prince Louis found in his childhood's friend more devotion than ever. The prince had a taste for historical researches, and would have displayed some aptitude for them, had not his education been neglected. Madame Cornu constituted herself his secretary at a distance. She passed whole days in the libraries, copying passages for him, and employed her numerous friends in procuring for him the books which he required. Never was friend-

ship more free from any calculation. Who could foresee, in 1840, that, eight years later, that which had been madness would become wisdom in the eyes of five million and a half electors?

Madame Cornu, in any case, was so far from agreeing with the counselors of illegal measures, that the 2d of December, 1851, marked a complete rupture between her and her friend. For many years she ceased absolutely to see him. She denied herself no sprightly saying; her little house on the Boulevard Latour-Maubourg was actively watched; her name figured for a short time on the lists of exile compiled by an awkward zealot. It was impossible that this state of things should last long. The Emperor had need of his little friend of Augsburg and Arenenburg. She was a part of himself, an organ of his life. Madame Cornu's affection for the prince was too warm to keep her resentment from yielding at a sign. Moreover, she was like all the rest of us. She had an ideal which she placed above politics. What finer occasion could she have to realize the good which she had dreamed? All favors were laid at her feet. It is unnecessary to say that she never accepted anything for herself; but from that moment she conceived the plan which absorbed her wholly for the next fifteen years: to seek to surround the Emperor with better people, to recall to him the dreams of his youth, to arouse his liberal sympathies for suffering nations, to recall to him the

special bonds which united him with Italy. An excellent policy, but one in which persistence was necessary. It was not her fault that the hesitations of the Emperor's mind, that habit of his of believing that he must take a step backward for every step which he took forward, transformed into mortal poison that which should have been our safety and our strength. We shall, perhaps, some day regret that she who knew so well the intermittences of that singular mind, its tergiversations, its abrupt decisions which became fatally irrevocable, did not calculate better the bearing of the effect which she produced through him. But who can foresee the unforeseeable? . . . . Moreover, it was in another direction that Madame Cornu was destined to render to her country eminent services whose memory will not perish.

Madame Cornu's vigorous education and her long researches had made of her, literally, a savant. She loved the conversation of the erudite, and, beginning with 1856, she missed hardly a single session of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres. We regarded her as a colleague; we discussed with her the gaps in our studies, the many fine things to be done, the many reforms to be brought about. She understood everything, saw clearly what was possible and what was not. She had too much good judgment to believe that she had riveted fetters on the Emperor. That was not granted to anyone; the solitary nature, the pro-

found personality of Napoleon III. never permitted him to give himself wholly. He yielded much; he was even weak; "No" was the word which he found it hardest to utter; but the foundation of his thought was unalterable. His own government displeased him, but he thought that France did not wish any other. Madame Cornu saw very well that it was impossible to change the groundwork of the government, and, above all, to persuade the Emperor to modify his official circle; still, she saw that, by small concessions, much could be obtained, especially in the order of serious things where she was sure to disturb the designs of very few rivals at court.

Superior instruction, or rather scientific instruction, was the line in which she succeeded best. Her knowledge of Germany had revealed to her, before we had talked to her about it, the defect of our higher education, of those courses open to all comers, without definite pupils, where one goes to pass an hour, not to study a science, but to hear someone talk agreeably. Let the Faculties continue the traditions of these excellent lessons; we have nothing to say against that; but Athenæum lectures at the Collège de France seem to us out of place. The extraordinary brilliancy of the instruction at the Sorbonne, under the Restoration; the too great indulgence which talent lacking in science enjoyed during the reign of Louis Philippe; the sharing of historical studies between the Academy

of Moral and Political Sciences, and the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres—which had the inconvenient feature that it allowed of the supposition that, in historical sciences, general exposition and work on documents can be sundered—and, above all, the taste which leads our country far more toward literary success than toward scientific discussions, had brought about in those of our institutions whose only aim is the discovery of the truth a certain abasement. Thanks to Madame Cornu, a renaissance took place. The creation of several courses—like those of M. Berthelot, of M. Leon Renier, of M. Bréal, at the College of France, the establishment of the School for Higher Studies, many scientific missions—some of which were very fruitful—a new impulse imparted to the acquisition of objects of antiquity, a great number of learned publications undertaken with the justest feeling of the requirements of erudition, marked a new era. It is very far from our intention to say that all this was her work ; but all this belonged to her indirectly, since it was under her influence that the Emperor entered into the direction of ideas which rendered the second half of his reign a very brilliant epoch for critical studies. M. Duruy, whom Madame Cornu supported with all her credit, applied the same views in the most widely varying directions. At the present hour, the fruits are visible. An immense progress has been accomplished in our historical and philolog-

ical studies. An authority has been established outside the elegant nonsense which fascinates the members of the fashionable world. Healthy methods are represented in nearly all branches by some good worker. The School of Higher Studies is an open laboratory, where these methods are taught in familiar lessons, the only sort which are fruitful. I made some objection, at first, on this last point. "Why," I said, "create a new establishment under this title? The School of Higher Studies has existed for three hundred and fifty years. Francis I. created it in 1530; it is the Collège de France, since this great establishment represents exactly that scientific elaboration for which the University—principally a corps for teaching—does not suffice. Placed between the Sorbonne and our College, your school will be what is termed in architecture out of perpendicular." They did not halt at this objection, and, no doubt, they did well. The Emperor found it easier to create new things than to reform that which was established, for the established defends itself; being kindly by nature, the Emperor listened to all claims and, in order not to discontent anyone, took contradictory measures, whence he afterward extricated himself only at the cost of a good deal of embarrassment.

This was Madame Cornu's experience in the efforts which she essayed in behalf of the fine arts. Here she suffered almost complete shipwreck. Her taste was grand and pure; she dreamed of an art

of the state, classic and grave, and could not endure the style of production which commerce encourages. In art, as in literature, she was even a little unjust, perhaps, toward certain merits. In this direction she held, in the highest degree, the opinions of the Bonapartes, which were essentially classic, intolerant, even, at times, which conceded no part to fancy, to petty literature, to romanticism, which were narrowly intrenched in Greek, Latin, and Italian tradition. I never could induce her to be just to Sainte-Beuve nor to one or two of the writers of our times, whose manner prevented her discerning their rare qualities. Art for the sake of art, literature for the sake of literature, were intolerable to her. She did not admit that there could be lateral currents in the great stream of the human mind. Literature, in her eyes, was a combat for France and progress; those who lingered by the hedgerows seemed to her deserters.

As all this was in her the fruit of the love for things for their own sake, she resigned herself cheerfully to be frequently vanquished. She suffered two or three grand defeats from the Emperor; but the nature of the friendship which the Emperor cherished for her could suffer no shock, nor did it permit of any susceptibility on her side. The kindness of her Majesty the Empress, her affection, her maternal cares for the Prince Imperial, the constant friendship of Prince Napoleon, of the Princess Julie Bonaparte, of her Majesty the

Queen of Holland rendered her happy and sustained her in her trials.

The lamentable act of the month of July, 1870, overturned all these dreams. She did not see the Emperor during those gloomy days, and, had she seen him, she probably could not have pierced the fatal mist in which that brain, whose weaknesses she knew so well, had shut itself up. At the beginning of the war she withdrew to a little house which she owned at Longpont. There M. Cornu was attacked by a serious illness; he died while being transported to Versailles. An affection of the heart had made its appearance in her some time previously; in a few months she grew twenty years older. She was much neglected, as she might have expected. This woman, to whom so many people owed their lives and fortunes, found herself in a state bordering on privation. She had nothing but her house at Longpont, which was insignificant in value. If some of her friends had not made her understand that her poverty would be an insupportable reproach to them, she would have died in destitution.

Her lofty idealism never weakened for a moment in her cruel illness. During the last days, the struggle between a strong and powerful head, still all alive, and annihilated organs, was terrible. In bidding farewell to one of her friends, she said:

"Tell Marguerite [a young girl of eighteen] that dying is no great matter; only it is very long."

Who, more than she, deserved to leave life calmly? She did a great deal of good; the good that she did survives her, and will bear fruit without ceasing; all her friends will keep her image preciously engraved upon their hearts.

QUEEN SOPHIE OF HOLLAND.*

THE death of Queen Sophie of Holland is a great grief to all those who love France, as well as all good and beautiful things. "'The Last of the Great Princesses,' that is the title of the study that ought to be published of her," said to me yesterday one of the men who knew her best, and who alone could relate all the sincerity, disinterested ardor, lofty aspirations in this choice soul, who was the victim, in so many respects, of our century of iron. She possessed, in fact, in the highest degree, the qualities which the throne exalts but does not create. Modern philosophy, which makes the destiny of man consist in a perpetual effort toward reason, cannot always be suitable to those whom fate has vowed to humble duties; it is, above all, the philosophy of sovereigns.

Queen Sophie, uniting with this the delicate tact of the woman, replied victoriously to those who believe that the sole perfection of ruins is the tender and heedless grace of a Marguerite de Provence, or the resignation of a Jeanne de Valois.

* Died May 25, 1877.

She belonged to that grand epoch of the German race in which so many strong qualities, masked for centuries by roughness or a sort of awkwardness, suddenly reached the point of revealing a form of human aristocracy hitherto unknown. That which characterized, in the highest degree, this new mode of feeling and thinking, was warmth of soul, a certain nobility, generosity, strength, implying respect for one's self and for others. French society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had furnished the model for what may be called politeness—enlightened mind. Goethe and his great contemporaries, while paying homage to our brilliant initiative, demonstrated that Voltaire, despite his well-deserved glory, was not everything; that the heart is a master to whom it is as necessary to listen as to the mind. Religion no longer consisted of servile attachment to the superstitions of the past, nor to the narrow forms of a theological orthodoxy; it was the infinite, vividly comprehended, embraced, realized in all one's life. Philosophy was no longer something dry and negative; it was the pursuit of the truth in all its branches, with the certainty that the truth to be discovered would be a thousand times more beautiful than the error which it replaced. Such a scheme of wisdom renders him who possesses it ardent and strong. The virile education which Queen Sophie received at the Court of Wurtemberg, her rich and open nature, early inculcated upon her those grand principles,

as a faith, but a faith which does not know what it is to reject or hate.

Her whole existence was permeated with it. The German Spirit then resembled Jehovah, who, according to the fine expression of Job, "maketh peace upon his high places." They did not wish to destroy anything, they sought to conciliate everything. The queen remained faithful to this spirit, even when it had been rejected by many of those who had proclaimed it. She showed herself anxious to welcome every good thing that blossomed in the whole world. National prejudice was what she feared the most; far from penning up the moral education of man in the notions of one race and one language, she dreamed, like Herder, of a reciprocal interchange of all the gifts of humanity. Her sympathy halted only in the presence of the mediocre and the evil; then she no longer understood.

Thus her whole life was passed in loving. She loved first the noble country which had her for its sovereign, and which, better than any other, knew her mind and her goodness. She loved Holland, not only because fate had made it her duty, but because she perceived at once the providential character of this sacred estuary, the asylum of liberty; where the human mind had so often found a refuge against the overstrong powers of the rest of Europe. Who can say that it will not have to fulfill this mission yet again? Holland heartily re-

turned her affection. Never was sovereign more popular. No one understood better than she the soul of the nation, its past grandeur, its future duties. She was proud of being associated with so much glory, and when, a few days hence, she reposes at Delft, by the side of the Taciturn whom she admired, her tomb will be one seal the more to the compact of union between Holland and the house of Orange, that is to say, to the fundamental chart of. the nationality of the country.

She loved France also. On the day of her marriage, in 1839, at Stuttgart, the Protestant clergyman who preached saw fit to spice his sermon with a diatribe against Napoleon. A young man of seventeen years, the first cousin to the princess, who was present, rose and left the building. This was a scandal, a great affair in the little court.

"If I had been able, I should have done as he did," said she. The grandeur of the French epopee, consisting of two indissoluble parts, the Revolution and the Empire, had early taken possession of her imagination. She loved us with all our defects. Our writers, our artists, our wits were familiar to her ; she often knew them better than we did ourselves. She was even curious about our democracy. She feared so greatly to pass by, inattentively, anything which might have a future ! Poor France ! she forgave her, because she knew that a great heart lay behind her faults, and that one day the prodigal son would be preferred to those who had never sinned.

It was thus that this great queen, the most German of the princesses of our century probably, had had nothing but sympathy for what fanatics call the race enemy. She loved both France and Germany, and she was right. Noble things, far from excluding each other, hold each other, summon each other, and we maintain that the great Germans of former days would recognize much more as their true sons in spirit those who, for the last ten years, have protested against a violent policy, than those who allow themselves to be dazzled by these exhibitions of force. The queen suffered cruelly on the day when she saw what she had adored as an aspiration toward justice become the brutal negation of all ideal principles. German unity had been her dream; but she desired it to be brought about otherwise. She hardly recognized the Germany of her youth in that imitation of the defects of our First Empire, in that transcendent disdain of all generosity, in that fashion of reproaching others for imitating those fine examples of internal reform which Germany, in its fine days, gave to all peoples.

That ardent life consumed itself; a sort of inward fire devoured that nature which nothing ever left untouched. It is not that the queen did not know how to take rest. Her tranquil Maison du Bois, near The Hague, breathed calm and serene gayety. The historical studies in which she delighted, and by which she sought to distract her

thoughts from apprehensions of the present, furnished an excellent regimen for her mind. Nevertheless, grave symptoms made their appearance in connection with the heart. In the month of December last, when the queen beheld Paris for the last time, her friends were alarmed. The sweet and tranquil atmosphere of The Hague restored her somewhat. A festival, organized by some friends of philosophy to celebrate the anniversary of Spinoza's death, interested her greatly. She wished to take part in it in spirit, and caused a portrait of the Dutch thinker, which never quitted her chamber, and is probably the only authentic one of him, to be exhibited in the hall of the reunion. That evening she mentioned the sage's fine maxim: "Philosophy is meditation, not on death but on life." Her death has been a public calamity to Holland. We shall, perhaps, meditate upon her life some day, when it will be possible, in thinking of her, to devote a share to something besides grief and regret.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF M. ERNEST HAVET, DECEMBER 24, 1889.

Gentlemen: The illustrious colleague to whom we to-day bid farewell was an eminent servant of the greatest work of our century, the persistent search of the truth. This savant was, before all

else, an upright man of French race. Like Descartes, he liked only clear ideas clearly expressed. The genius of Germany (when one could speak of a German genius) pierced more deeply, perhaps, into the abysses which hem us in so closely; but Havet will be quoted, in the centuries to come, for having been the first to cast upon the problems which have troubled souls the most, a few just, firm, sober, and cold words. He believed, and I believe with him, that the era of official veils is passed, that it serves no end to make a distinction between the truths which are good for utterance and those which are not good, since no one is deceived any longer, and since the mass of the human species, reading the eyes of the thinker, demands of him, without circumlocution, whether the truth is not, at bottom, melancholy. The only means of consoling poor humanity a little, is to persuade it thoroughly that we are concealing nothing from it, and that we are treating it, not as rhetoricians occupied with political and pedagogical cares, but as learned men, with absolute sincerity.

Havet never concealed a shade, even a fugitive shade, of his thought. He believed in civilization, in reason, in that light of the human conscience which reveals to us some features of the truth, some rules of good. For him the history of this revelation, the only real one, was clear in its essential lines. Born in Greece, that motherland of all

harmonies, reason, under divers names and not without strange alloys, makes the circuit of the world. That sun, of which Rome in its grand epoch possessed such fine reflections, never disappears completely. Humanity lives upon it. The supernatural ideas of the Orient, the decadence of the ancient world, the invasions of the barbarians, veil it but do not extinguish it. Christianity, in its vital parts, is only a viaticum composed of good Greek ideas and cleverly prepared for the gloomy night of a thousand years to which the dawn of the Renaissance put an end. Thus all proceeds from a single luminous blossoming. Greece prepared the scientific framework, capable of being indefinitely enlarged, and the philosophical framework, susceptible of embracing everything, in which, for the space of two thousand years, the intellectual and moral efforts of the race to which we belong have not ceased to move.

Let us set aside then all petty reserves (I, as the historian of Israel, should have some to make); our colleague is in the right. Greek culture demands no sacrifice from the reason; the culture which comes from the East does demand it, since no fact has ever appeared to prove that a Superior Being has made to a man or to men any revelation whatever. The idea (*to kalon*) of Greece is indeed the whole of human life, embellished, ennobled. It was Havet's task to follow this great ribbon of living water, this blue Nile which traverses the

deserts. He acquitted himself of it with a sort of faith. Never was believer more faithful to his dogma than was Havet to his philosophy.

Yes, I repeat it, he was right. Greece created truth as she created beauty. On the other hand, our Celtic and Germanic races have certainly had some share in founding that which may be called honesty, uprightness of heart. All the best that is contained in Christianity we have put there, and that is why we love it, that is why it must not be destroyed. Christianity, in one sense, is decidedly our work, and in seeking therein the traces of our most intimate sentiments, Havet was not pursuing a chimera. Christianity is ourselves, and what we love the most in it is ourselves. Our fresh, cool fountains, our forests of oaks, our rocks have collaborated in this. In the order of the things of the soul, our charity, our love of men, our tender and delicate feeling for woman ; the suave and subtle mysticisn of a Saint Bernard or a Francis d'Assisi, spring rather from our ancestors, possibly pagans, than from the egotist David, or the exterminator Jehu, or the fanatic Esdras, or the strict observer Nehemiah.

Havet comprehended all this marvelously, and expressed it in perfect style. His book on "The Origins of Christianity," which treats only one side of the subject, treats it in a definitive manner. It is an inflexible book. Havet believes in the true; he makes no compromises. Tell him that, in re-

jecting those old, traditional beliefs, we shall reject at the same time, many excellent things; that these conventions, beloved and accepted, are the postulates of life, as it were; he will tell you that pretended social unity cannot be taken as the measure of the investigation of matters. The first approach to truth is rarely agreeable. Down to the present day, no one has been right with impunity. The Greek who dared to say that the sun might be as large as the Peloponnesus was treated not only as a madman but as a malefactor. The moderate considered him a false, exaggerated mind; he was put to death, it is said. That no longer happens in our day. Havet was reviled by all routines in coalition, by the secret league of all weaknesses; he stood his ground, remained calm, and ended by carrying the day.

Honor then, gentlemen, to this illustrious friend of the truth! He was one of the glories of our race. He felt all the legitimate needs of his century, without participating in any of its faults. His grand soul traversed the world with no other care than that of the truth. The seductions, the bewitching charms of probability, did not attract him. He loved only the certain; miracles escaped his notice, he beheld only that which lasts—reason. The triumph of reason will be his recompense. A recompense! To tell the truth, we desire none. We have served the truth under the hard conditions imposed by fate upon the human race. That is our recompense, we desire no other.

Nil nisi te, domine; nil nisi te—Nothing but Thee, O Lord; nothing but Thee.

Farewell, dear colleague. You have fought the good fight, the fight for the true, for reason. We shall wait long, no doubt, for the triumph of our cause. But we have eternity in which to wait. Our ancestors of the College of France, who founded the true, in the midst of persecution and poverty, saw very different sights: Ramus, who got himself killed for supporting the correctness of the principles of our institute; Denys Lambin, who beheld his fate written in that of Ramus; many modest "professors of tongues," as we were called, who braved the haughty Sorbonne of those days! More happy than they, we shall have perceived the true, without suffering much for it. Moreover, is not your fate worthy of envy? In a funeral inscription found in Syria, the passer-by is supposed to console the dead in these words: "Courage, since you died without having to lament any of your children, and since you leave in life the wife whom you loved!"

This last happiness was not reserved to you; the loss of a wife who was worthy of you was one of the griefs which darkened your last years. But you leave behind you two sons whom we love, the heirs of your method and of your learning. You leave a completed work, by which all friends of the true will know how to profit. Courage, dear Havet, courage!

SPEECH AT THE FUNERAL OF M. CUVILLIER-FLEURY, OCTOBER 21, 1887.

How many afflictions, blow upon blow, gentlemen! After the eminent moralist, after the faithful and impartial historian, to-day it is our dean in age, the critic of high authority, the excellent judge of things of the mind, who has been taken from us. During his long existence of eighty-five years, M. Cuvillier-Fleury lived only in the love of letters, of that repose of spirit which they give, in the faith in good which they inspire. It is the glory of the ancient literatures of Greece and Rome, that they have been able, through the worships of which they have been the objects for the last four centuries, to furnish noble lives with the very principle of their nobility—to have concealed, beneath the charms of beautiful language, a powerful leaven of moral education and of sound philosophy. Early devoted to the education for which his precocious successes designated him, M. Cuvillier-Fleury did not ask of literature only the amusement of his hours of leisure, the least vain of the satisfactions of vanity. He sought in it the rule of reason and the consolation of life. And the rule which he found in it was good. Cicero, in ancient times, had set the example of associating with letters an elevated sentiment of nobility and uprightness. Our ancient univer-

sity had no other creed than that. Those old professors were honest men. They appreciated all the exercises of the mind by the good which they did to the soul, by the efficacy which they exhibited in preparing good men. They formed few learned men; but they did form liberal men, and amiable men, which is also something. An excellent school, from the point of view of education! Education is a work of the heart, not of erudite refinements. Where should we be, had humanity sought in the Gospel only a curious linguistic document, instead of seeking there the aliment of the soul and the book of the heart?

Liberalism was the religion of that excellent generation. M. Cuvillier-Fleury and his contemporaries had the happiness of starting out with the triumph of their ideas. The aspirations of their youth were fully satisfied before the moment of disappointment arrived. They were victorious at their hour, after having deserved their victory; they beheld a liberal and enlightened monarchy, the complete reign of that of which they had dreamed. When the vicissitudes which human things cannot escape arrived they could say: "I have lived." They had not to endure the harsh grief which other generations have suffered, of seeing themselves stifled before birth, of being blighted in their flower. The strong and brilliant life which filled the interval from 1830 to 1848 was lived through entire by our colleague. Summoned, by

the dynasty which liberal France had imposed on herself, to the most delicate functions, he showed himself worthy of such a mark of confidence. The culture of his whole life had prepared him admirably for this task. His principles were so well defined that on the day after the catastrophe which seemed to put them in the wrong, they remained the same that they had been on the day of battle. "I honestly confess," said our well-beloved colleague, M. de Sacy, one of the most worthy companions-in-arms of M. Cuvillier-Fleury, "I have not changed. Far from being shaken in my convictions, reflection, age, and experience have confirmed me in them. I believe in right and justice, as I believed in them in my most artless youthful period. I am happy to take up in letters, in philosophy, in everything which pertains to the domain of conscience and pure thought, that principle of liberty which circumstances have adjourned in politics. That is what we shall try to do in the *Journal des Débats*. Possessing different shades of taste and opinion, it is the mind which will rally us all together." M. Cuvillier-Fleury could have said this quite as well as his friend. Those old masters, who are decried nowadays, were profoundly versed in the art of educating souls. And what pupils they formed! You know one of them, gentlemen, since he is our colleague. How is it possible for me not to speak of him over this grave, of him whom M. Cuvillier-Fleury called his best

work, of him who will count his absence from this ceremony as one of the bitter consequences of exile, a thing which is always so bitter in itself? The perfect naturalness of the honest man, that pure and sincere manner of writing, that passionate sentiment for France and all her glories, that amenity, that delicate taste of literary knowledge, of those qualities, M. le Duc D'Aumale desired that a portion of all this should be attributed to his preceptor. Let it be according to his will! What more touching, more honorable for both, than this sentiment of exquisite friendship which the master felt for his pupil and the pupil for his master? One of the most beautiful spectacles of our century has been furnished by this esteem, this reciprocal respect, which carry us back to the fine days of Quintilian, as Rollin understood him: the pupil recognizing the fact that he owed to his master the notion of the serious in life; the master, under the appearance of oratorical preoccupation solely, being dominated by anxiety for uprightness and honesty. Oh, great and holy school of educators, I fear that the pedantic methods of modern pedagogy will find it difficult to fill your place.

And, when M. Cuvillier-Fleury had completed his task of educator, how well he understood the art of continuing it, in the view of the literary public, by those articles in the "Miscellanies" of the *Journal des Débats*, which reserved for initiated readers such delicate enjoyment and such useful

guidance! Our colleague's criticism was a perpetual lesson in good sense. It was the criticism of an honest man, founded upon rectitude of judgment, the taste for naturalness in everything, with extreme indulgence for whatever departed from his rule, and a secret taste for the qualities which were not those that he recommended. Here, again, Quintilian was his model, and the latter's *dulcia vitia*, which the latter found in Seneca, bear a strong resemblance to the brilliant defects which our colleague blamed, while forced, at times, to love them.

He loved ardently that which he believed to be true. He served it with speech as well as with pen. His conversation was very much alive; he took great pains with it, for it was one means of accentuating the conviction which he bore within him. Oh! what a good house the *Journal des Débats* was then, and what a memory we retain of those amiable jousts of words, in which M. de Sacy, and the friend who goes to-day to join him, indulged in a combat of wit, spirit, and good nature! At the Academy the tourney began again, and it was inoffensive; for both broke lances in the same cause. Everything which was good, noble, generous, made their hearts vibrate. Their patriotism was pure as the thought of a child. Above all, they beheld France: they believed in her, they adored her. Poor France! It is impossible that she should perish; she has been too much beloved!

The literary faith which animated M. Cuvillier-Fleury sustained him to the end. The gift of long life was accorded to him, his appetite for beautiful things and his taste for society suffered cruel reverses; an almost complete blindness separated him partly from life—the life which he loved so well. He supported this cruel trial with admirable courage. His solitude, or, rather, his foretaste of the eternal shadows, was, moreover, greatly softened. The noble and devoted companion of his life redoubled the miracles of vigilant tenderness with which she surrounded him, and calmed his sufferings, as has been very well said, by the graces of her mind and the inexhaustible delicacies of her heart.

Farewell, dear colleague and friend. I recall that one day I was attacked in the *Débats*, I do not know very well why—perhaps rightly. I still hear you say in an aside to M. de Sacy: "We must uphold our young colleague." The young colleague, dear master, will soon follow you, perhaps. Life is only a shadow; one gives to that shadow a certain reality by devoting one's self, as you have done, to the persistent seeking for that which is straightforward, simple, just, and pure.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE STATUE OF M. ABOUT, DECEMBER 20, 1887.

HERE, indeed, gentlemen, are those features which we loved! Here is the smile which fluttered upon the lips of our colleague, when he was writing all those charming works; here is that open countenance, on which was to be read, at the first glance, the philosophy, at once ironical and amiable, which sustained him in his career of ardent activity. What a rich nature, gentlemen, what a superabundance of vigor! What a joy it was for us, during those years of sadness which marked the middle of our century, to behold this brilliant young man enter the lists of the great battles, this true son of Voltaire, in whom the old French spirit, that which, though conquered, always comes to life again, seemed to jeer merrily at those who had believed it to be dead, and to cry: "I still live!" Yes, among the many illustrious newcomers in the field, thanks to whom our country, humiliated by so many badly concerted revolutions and blind reactions, was able to respond, after 1858, to the challenges which were addressed to her, About was the one who continued our ancient tradition with the least alloy. He possessed the dominating quality of the French mind, honest straightforwardness, clearness. Voltaire was, above all

things, an honest mind ; About was so, also, in the highest degree. To demand of such men that they shall eternally wear a mask upon their faces, accept with docility the conventions, often puerile, submission to which is but a small merit in the majority of people, is to demand of the light that it shall not proceed in a straight line. The atmosphere in which they dwell is absolutely transparent ; mystery has no meaning for them ; like the electric light, they search all the crannies and render falsehood difficult ; it is impossible for them not to stigmatize the absurdities which they perceive.

Is this egotism, coldness? Oh, no! certainly not. These pitiless adversaries of falseness and subdued lights love the truth. Hypocrisy inspires in them a real nausea ; dogmas which flee the light irritate them. To every proposition to dissimulate what they think they reply : "What is the use of living if one has no longer any cause for living?"

A strong love, moreover, a dominating love was the moral principle of that soul which superficial critics have characterized as frivolous. It was the love of this poor France, to whom he owed the best that was in him. The parties which succeeded each other in power, with disheartening rapidity, would have liked to have him refuse to survive them, in order that he might remain faithful to them. But France still existed for him, after the ruin of parties. His patriotism contrived to be both eloquent and courageous in the days of trial.

France was the fairy who had endowed him, who had crowned him, so long as it was in her power to confer crowns. When she had no longer anything to distribute to those who loved her, except signs of mourning, About vowed himself to a sadness for which he refused to be consoled. He conceived suspicions even of his talent, which might have served to distract him. The dainty writer of former days became a fighter of journalistic battles. He grew bitter, sometimes misunderstood his friends, irritated his enemies.

Wrath is a bad councilor, gentlemen, even when it is most just. The worst feature in the condition of the conquered is, that his situation condemns him to deceive himself. He becomes exacting suspicious, susceptible. If About sometimes allowed himself to be led astray by false judgments of this sort he was himself their chief victim. Ah ! great asperity of our time! Adversaries rend each other, scorn each other. Judging from their extreme severity toward each other, one would believe that they are virtuous, and, nevertheless, if a true moral sentiment inspired their attacks, they would be indulgent. Oh ! when shall we behold a temple erected to reciprocal pardon and oblivion ? To tell the truth, I fear that the temple of my dreams is the cemetery. It is only there that peace, which is, after all, only a chimera, becomes a reality. I think that we shall soon say, with Ecclesiastes : " Happy are the dead ! "

Our colleague did not receive even that recompense which old fighters generally enjoy, of looking on, tranquilly, toward the end of their lives, at the battles of others. At the moment when he was about to take possession of the chair to which your votes had called him, death came to take him. We did not have the joy of seeing him sit among us. The battle of life has assumed such asperity in our day that we no longer pick up the dead. Thanks to you, gentlemen, thanks to the talent of the artist, whose work has just been revealed to you, the future will salute, in this place, the true image of one of the men who have added the most, in our epoch, to that mass of reason which, although still feeble, is augmented from century to century by the efforts of all great souls and all good spirits. Behind the clouds which gather there is still a blue sky, there are still warm rays. When the hour of impartiality shall have arrived, many adversaries will recognize the fact that they have toiled at the same task without knowing it. Then will all proclaim that About was one of those who have loved the most, at a critical hour, if ever there was one, both progress and liberty.

LETTER TO M. GUSTAVE FLAUBEBT ON THE "TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTHONY."*

VENICE, September 8, 1874.

My Dear Friend: Yesterday, at the Labbia palace, Tiepolo's scenes from the life of Cleopatra made me think of your "Temptation of St. Anthony," which has been so unjustly criticised. Three years ago, my beloved and regretted Arnold made me understand the brilliancy, life, color, and individual originality of these frescoes. Did Tiepolo intend to give a lesson in history, a lesson in morals, a lesson in archæology, or a lesson in politics? Did he undertake to raise or lower Antony and Cleopatra? Was he accused of having failed in respect for the royal majesty, which was compromised in a festival of equivocal appearance? No; he opened to the imagination a brilliant dream. That was enough; neither archæologist nor moralist, neither historian nor politician, have any fault to find. Nothing is bad in art, save that which has neither style nor construction:

Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audiendi semper fuit æqua potestas.†

People no longer understand it in that way. The weakening of the imagination tends to create

* This article has never been published.

† Painters and poets have always possessed equal powers of making themselves heard.

for the written, in comparison with the painted, work an inequality of treatment which we cannot accept. Callot and Teniers did what you have done; they hesitated at nothing, and no one blamed them. The "Temptations" of Callot and Teniers teach nothing in the line of history, prove nothing in the department of morals, refute nothing in politics. They did not try to preach, to improve, to instruct, any more than you. Their aim was not, any more than yours has been, to prove that profound faith triumphs over the most violent assaults. They were not reproached with being bad painters of saints, with having dishonored St. Anthony. Callot and Teniers are jesters. You are fantastic. The one should be as much permitted as the other! "A Midsummer-night's Dream" has its rights, by the side of the Gallic farce and the laughter of Voltaire, which have their rights also. If I had still been writing for the papers when your book appeared, I should have tried to controvert these errors. One person insisted that you had undertaken to write a history of gnosticism, and thought that a good summary would have been of more value; another considered that you had given a bad rendering of St. Anthony's biography; one declared that your secret idea had been to inculcate a system of philosophy. In our land people insist that a book shall instruct, edify, or amuse . . . . really amuse, cause laughter. The thing which, above all others,

is amusing and philosophical, the contemplation of reality, the spectroscopy of the universe, is but little understood. People will not admit that the nightmare has a charm of its own. They grant it in painting; they admit "Salome" or "The Executioners" of Henri Regnault, works which, assuredly, teach nothing whatever, and which do not awaken any agreeable image. How much nearer right was Boileau, that great artist in form:

> Il n'est pas de serpent ni de monstre odieux
> Qui, par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux.*

That great consoler of life, imagination, has one special privilege, which makes of it, all things considered, the most precious of gifts; it is that its sufferings are pleasures. With it everything is profit. It is the base of the soul's health, the essential condition of gayety. It makes us enjoy the folly of fools and the wisdom of sages. The Greeks took pleasure in the cave of Trophonius, evidently, since they resorted thither. If the nocturnal revels were true, I do not say that I should care to go there; that is contrary to the rules of conduct which I have imposed upon myself, but I should desire that there should be people who would go there, and I would read then with pleasure the vividly colored books which they would make out of it.

* There is no serpent nor odious monster which may not please the eyes when imitated by art.

People forget that one-half of Greek literature, that marvel, that rule of the beautiful, when it is understood, is only chased work and imagination. What does an idyl of Theocritus prove? What aim did that charming poet propose to himself, three-quarters of the time? The aim that our friend Théophile Gautier had; to find a theme with fine images, with adorably made verses. In the first idyl, thirty-five verses are consecrated to the description of a porringer with a realism which outdoes anything that the school of our day has ever dared attempt. Has Bion's "Tombeau d'Adonis" any object, moral, historical, or political? And the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, that delicious series of noble and enchanting images, profoundly connected with nature, each one of which evokes a thousand questions, without solving them . . . . I really believe that, if a poet in our day were to make a masterpiece of this sort, there would be found critics to say to him: "Capricious childishness, what do you want with us!" Alas! our public is like one of those of which your Apollonius speaks: "It believes, like a brute, in the reality of things." When an art shall have been constructed upon that basis, I shall believe; until then, it will remain for me the reasoning of Blemmyes, of pygmies, of sciapods. Do you know what M. Hugo thinks of your book? It is said that, in addition to his genius, he possesses remarkable discernment in matters of taste.

Because the procession of the dreams of humanity resembles a masquerade, at times, that is no reason for interdicting its presentation. Poor humanity! Oh! the further I go, the more I love it, and the more esteem I feel for it. How it toils! Setting out from such a depth, what great or charming things it has drawn from its bosom! "Oh! what a good animal man is!" Among all these sacred follies, there is not one which does not possess its touching side, which does not redeem our race and the spirits which it bears. Even irony is a cult; comedy is the act of an aristocrat, which Louis XIV., great centuries, great peoples, alone can permit themselves. What! it pleases this noble, so tried by fate, this poor man so battered by storms, to turn his attention for a moment from his destiny, to amuse himself with a review of his chimeras, to laugh for an hour, before he resumes his weeping, and people consider him wicked! I persist in believing that this martyr suffers for something, that he will have his recompense some day. But everyone has his hours of doubt; at those hours, nothing consoles him but form and color. And this is not a vain debauch. The imagination has its own philosophy. Ask Goethe, ask Darwin. Morphology is everything, and everything will be brought back to it.

Why have we not Sainte-Beuve? He criticised but he understood. Do you remember our dinners with that great friend whose loss leaves me in the

same literary void as though he had carried half of the public with him to the tomb? I have always maintained, you know, that color is only the accessory, that it serves to heighten a principal fact, which ordinarily ought to be of the moral order. But there is no absolute rule. Lucian, Apuleius, and even that jester Philostratus, the Méry of antiquity, must not be dismissed. Everything that is not common should be received with kindness. Plebeian platitude alone, in art, has anything immoral about it.

What an error to call the exercise of our natural faculties a malady! It is mediocrity which is scrofulous and sickly. Have you noticed that the audacious and narrow-minded spirits which our country has lost have not acquired a single new idea since? The work of the imagination is healthy, as it is healthy for a country to have good soldiers, good painters, good philologists, good workers of every sort. People understood this forty years ago. But you have hit upon a bad time. At the present moment, parties appreciate us in proportion to the aid which we afford them. You present to such a public a work which has been long studied; each one asks himself in what way you serve his policy. Poor country! That has happened to it which happened to your Catoblépas, who devoured his own paws, one day, without noticing it.

You are credited with propagandist intentions

while you desire but one thing : to charm, to strike, to touch, to move. You offer to the delicate a perfume to smell ; the dullards have swallowed it in gulps. That is no fault of yours. People have not comprehended your admirable conclusion, the profoundly conceived rôle of Hilarion—science slowly developing its mortal batteries—your adorable Ebionites, your Buddha, your Oannes, the discourse of Isis, the philosophical dialogue of Anthony upon Satan's shoulders. This enchants me, and I am not the only one to be enchanted ; some Strasburg professors to whom I lent your book were delighted with it. We may be challenged, it is true ; in regard to you we stand somewhat in the position of a chemist or a physician, to whom a young and charming woman speaks of his works. Our ideas, returning to us clothed in your rich fancy, charm us. You are considered to be exaggerated in many cases where you are only true. Your impression of the desert of Libya is just. Even he who has been only to Cairo and has seen the tombs of the Caliphs, almost buried in the sand, has understood this sort of beauty. It is not the only one, and the public must not be confined to it. I confess to you, timidly, that more than once, in Syria, in Egypt, I dreamed of a pretty house in the valley of the Auge, tapestried with Bengal roses, of a meadow on the banks of the Oise, of a village in Brittany at the hour when the evening Angelus is sounding. But we must not tear from the æsthetic lyre a single one of its

cords. It is when they all vibrate in unison that they make the full accord which is called a fine century.

And, surely, that which has been the least understood is your indifference to popular success. How many men besides yourself, after "Madame Bovary," would have made endless rehearsals of the work which the public had accepted. You have fled to the other pole, from Normandy to the desert. Aristocrat that you are, you feared to have perpetrated some folly, when you saw that you amused the public. Wrath has taken possession of you; heroic in everything, you have taken a bludgeon to put to flight your plebeian admirers. I understand it; but now you must take your revenge. Return to that which captivates all the world. You have painted the repulsive and the strange in a masterly manner. *Sat prata biberunt.* A person who is very fond of you said to me, a few months ago, how greatly he desired to see you make a book which should be the whole of yourself, which should excite men to nobleness, to virtue. Keep your foundations; they are admirable; but make them serve some purpose. Add a trifle; place a flower on these manure-heaps, as you did in "Madame Bovary." The good and the beautiful exist, as well as the evil and the ugly. You will be able to paint them admirably when you wish it.

We leave in a few days for Bologna and Parma. Believe in my sincere friendship.

HENRI FRÉDÉRIC AMIEL.

I.

We must feel infinitely grateful to the persons who, moved by a sentiment of pious friendship, have undertaken the difficult task of introducing Henri Frédéric Amiel to the public, which occupied the mind of this distinguished thinker to a large extent, but which a certain timidity prevented his addressing directly. Amiel's intellectual situation is one of the most peculiar of our times; his life exhibits admirably several of the maladies which are at work upon our epoch. Although possessed of really eminent philosophical aptitudes, Amiel arrived only at sadness; gifted with true literary qualities, he was not able to give to his ideas that form which commands respect. A perfectly upright man, he lacked firm design in the control of his life. Moralists and publicists of the second rank have been more remarked than he; writers a hundred times less learned have left their impress on our literary history; a multitude of mediocre natures have, perhaps, rendered more services to the cause of the true and the good than this passionate friend of all that is ideal.

If Amiel had been one of that troop, assuredly the best among the elect, which has taken for its motto "*ama nesciri*" (love to be unknown), there would be nothing to say. It is an accepted prin-

ciple among persons experienced in criticism that literature impairs that which it touches; that the most beautiful sentiments will always remain unknown; that the most true and vigorous ideas that have ever been entertained with regard to the universe have remained unpublished, or, to put it more accurately, unexpressed. God and his angels, as the phrase used to run, have enjoyed the privilege of the only fine spectacles in the moral and intellectual order; I mean those of meditations and sentiments produced in the bosom of an absolute objectivity, without being spoiled by the interested second thought of how they may be put to profit. The man who is virtuous in silence, the grand heart which makes no parade of its heroism, the great mind which yields up its lofty views only when forced to it, so to speak, are superior to the artisan in words, engrossed in the idea of giving a form to opinions which, as likely as not, he does not cherish very deeply. Amiel, though very virtuous, had not reached the degree of disinterestedness of those ascetics who take a vow of perpetual silence. He was not exempt from the great malady of our day, which is the literary malady—the false idea that thought and sentiment exist for the purpose of being expressed, which turns one aside from loving life for itself, and causes an exaggerated value to be placed on talent. Amiel would have liked to produce, but he was thoroughly conscious that he was not a

writer. According to the vulgar expression which a certain style of literature has brought into fashion, he is a *raté*—a flash-in-the-pan—because he does not know how to attach the public to the order of ideas which he has chosen ; but he is a flash-in-the-pan who is conscious of his defects, who adores that which he does not possess himself, and eats his heart out with regret. He does not see with sufficient distinctness that, without being a writer, one can do things of the highest rank, and he falls back upon the falsest of compromises—I mean upon the private journal, detached thoughts, memoirs destined for himself alone.

This is a dangerous, sometimes an unhealthy fashion—a fashion which is adopted ordinarily by those who have no other, and upon which must rest, unless in the case of exceptional success, *a priori* a certain condemnation. The man who has the time to write a private journal seems to us not to have comprehended how vast the world is. The extent of things to be known is immense. The history of humanity is barely begun ; the study of nature contains in reserve discoveries which it is absolutely impossible to foresee. How can a man, in the presence of so colossal a task, pause to devour himself, to doubt life? It is far better to take his mattock and set to work. The day when it will be permissible to loiter over the exercises of a discouraged thought, will be that on which we shall begin to perceive the fact that there is a limit to

the matter to be learned. Now, supposing that, in the course of centuries, such a limit should be perceived for history, it will never be perceived for nature. But the problems which appear completely barred, like those of physical astronomy, are susceptible of being suddenly shifted in an unforeseen manner. While working on the formulas, ever more and more comprehensive, acquired by preceding scientific generations, physics, chemistry, biology have before them a programme which enlarges in proportion as they advance. My friend M. Berthelot would have time to occupy himself during hundreds of consecutive lives without ever writing a word about himself. I calculate that I should require five hundred years to exhaust the compass of Semitic studies as I understand them; and if the taste for them should ever weaken in me, I would learn Chinese; that new world, still awaiting criticism almost intact, would whet my appetite for an indefinite period. Subjective skepticism, doubt as to the legitimacy of our faculties, is the birdlime in which the natures attacked by the malady of scruple are caught. Apprehensions of this sort always come from a certain indolence of mind. He who thirsts for reality is drawn out of himself. It is for this reason that a genius like M. Victor Hugo never had the leisure to scrutinize himself. When one is powerfully attracted by things, one is sure that it is they and not a vain phantasmagoria which one is clasping.

Amiel has not that love for the universe which causes one to have no eyes for anything else. For more than thirty years he never let a day pass without observing himself and describing his state of soul; he recorded his reflections in large quarto notebooks which, when put together, made a total of more than sixteen thousand pages. *Felix culpa!* From this undigested mass, Amiel's friends—oh, what a good thing it is to leave true friends behind one!—have culled two volumes of thoughts which offer us, without any sacrifice made to the work of art, the perfect mirror of one of the most upright of modern consciences, arrived at the highest degree of culture, and at the same time a finished picture of the sufferings of a sterile genius. These two volumes may certainly be reckoned among the most interesting philosophical writings which have appeared in recent years. Amiel's defects, in fact, are as striking as possible. He himself takes pleasure in emphasizing them and placing them in prominent positions; but there is not a single one of them which does not proceed from an excess of nobility and an elevated principle. "I insist obstinately on doing nothing which can please me, serve me, or aid me. My passion is to injure my own interests, to set good sense at defiance, to be headstrong to my own detriment. . . . . I am ashamed of my interests, as of an ignoble and servile motive."

"What a singular nature," he exclaims, "and

what an eccentric propensity! Not to dare to enjoy artlessly, without scruple, and to withdraw from the table for fear the repast should come to an end." "As soon as a thing attracts me," he says again, "I turn away my head, or, rather, I can neither accustom myself to insufficiency, nor find anything which will satisfy my aspirations. The real disgusts me, and I do not find the ideal." That is the truth. His impotence comes from his being too perfect. "In love," says M. Scherer, "he recoiled before avowal; in literature, he recoiled before a work." One cannot be a man of letters without some defect. The perfect man, such as Amiel dreamt of, would have no talent. Talent is a petty vice, of which a saint should cure himself first of all.

Amiel's sterility springs from another cause: the too great *diversity* of his intellectual and moral origins. Variety, in this line, is an excellent thing; but the two elements must not neutralize each other. One must dominate, and the rest must be only accessory. Amiel is too hybrid to be fruitful. The excellent Germanic education which he received was constantly at war with other parts of his nature. He laid the blame upon the language.* He thought that French was the cause of the difficulty which he found in expressing his thought. A profound error. "The French language," he says, "can express nothing nascent in the germ. It paints only effects, results, the *caput*

* Vol. i, pp. 83-84; vol. ii, p. 184.

mortuum (the death's head), but not the cause, the movement, the force, the future of any phenomenon whatever. It is analytical and descriptive; but it does not help one to understand anything, for it does not make one see the beginnings and formation out of nothing." If Amiel had been better acquainted with the language in which he habitually wrote, he would have seen that French suffices for the expression of every thought—even of thoughts the most foreign to its ancient genius—and that if, in the transfusion, it allows some details to escape, precisely these details were after-growths which prevented the new thought from assuming a universal character. Amiel was not a perfect master of his instrument. Not knowing all his notes, he considered it unfit to produce certain sounds; then he threw it out of tune with impatience. He would have done better to study it thoroughly.

Amiel went to Germany when young—almost as soon as he left college. He embraced, with much ardor, the intellectual discipline which then reigned. The school of Hegel taught him its complicated manner of thinking, and, at the same time, rendered him incapable of writing. This school incited rather to eloquence and dissertation upon all sorts of subjects than to the continuous composition which prose demands. Hegel has some good points; but one must know how to take him. One must restrict one's self to an infusion; he is an excellent tea, but one must not chew the leaves.

Amiel did too much of this. For him everything becomes matter for system—so completely that, for example, on meeting a very pretty woman one day in the Jura, in the neighborhood of Soleure, he passes his day in constructing the theory of coquetry and of the inconveniences of beauty.*

If, at least, this Hegelian education had but given him the scientific spirit! Nothing of the sort. No school has disseminated in the world more ingenious or profound ideas than that of Hegel; but in hardly any direction has it produced truly learned men. There is in Hegel a little of Raymond Lulle. I mean of that false idea that one can substitute lay figures and general procedure for the direct study of realities. Hence a sort of lassitude, which speedily manifested itself among the leaders and disciples of this school, otherwise so eminent. There is no curiosity when the result is foreseen in advance. One quickly perceives the end of that which one attains by the turnpike of logic; one never sees the end of reality.

The sort of lack of perpendicular, which renders the layers of Amiel's life so unstable, has for cause this ill-harmonized education. He is not established squarely in his chair; he has not a sufficiently clear idea of the goal of the human mind—of that which gives and furnishes a serious base to life; he is neither a learned man nor a lettered man; he declares repeatedly that for him the supreme ideal is the art of the man of letters; but he

* Vol. ii, p. 6, and following pages.

is perfectly conscious that he lacks this art; he even forms for himself a false idea of it; he makes too much of a distinction between the foundation and the form; he would gladly believe that writing is distinctly separate from thinking. He is one of the most honest seekers after truth that has ever existed; he is almost a saint, and, withal, he halts at every turn in the road to bewail evils or (what is more singular) imaginary sins, and to note details which are not remarked by a man who is in haste. He is never in haste; that constitutes a quality, if you choose to so consider it; but it is the mark of a mind only moderately possessed by curiosity, by a craving for things. He does not picture to himself the world as great or astonishing as it is; he would like to imagine—God forgive me!—that one can know the final facts about it. Now, that is not possible. Everything remains to be done, or to be done over in the order of science, of nature, and of humanity. When one is conscious of laboring in this infinite work, one has no time to pause over petty melancholy points on the road.

The most vexatious thing about it is that this very strained philosophy did not render him as happy as he deserved to be. At first glance, one cannot well see what complaint he could have to make against his destiny. He was born eminently well endowed in intellectual and moral directions; he possessed all the means for acquiring high culture; he never had to struggle with harsh necessi-

ties ; he lived for sixty years, suffering much, it is true, in his last years, but his mind was always free. With all this, it seems as though he should have been as happy as a king ; yet his habitual turn of thought is a complaint against his fate. It appears that his childhood was not encompassed with affection, and that is one of the worst things that can happen to a man ; the joys and sorrows of early years are reflected in the whole life. Geneva, on the other hand, was one of the points in the world which was least suited to his nature ; his German education had made him practically a stranger there, and then, a small state resembles a small town. Perhaps Amiel did not observe a sufficiently complete system of precautions with regard to the society in which he lived. When one is not like other men, one must guard one's self against them, to some extent. All that any one of us has the right to exact from the society of which he forms a part is that he shall be tolerated. One almost always succeeds in securing this, by dint of good humor and impartiality. One of Amiel's bits of simplicity was to consider himself obliged to take part in the battles of the pygmies, and to make common cause with a party which, had it been in power, would have understood him no better than the democratic party. He became a reactionary wantonly, and in the most disinterested fashion. The man who has consecrated his life to the search for the true and the pursuit of good ought not to

attach himself absolutely to any of the revolutions which follow each other in this world. He should know but one interest—that of the human soul and the human mind.

That which is to be sincerely regretted is that Amiel did not come to Paris in 1860, at the epoch when the *Germanic Review* was founded; M. Scherer invited him. M. Sainte-Beuve would have exercised a dominating influence upon him. We should have succeeded, I think, in diminishing, for his own good, the deleterious influence of the ferments of sadness which nature, as well as his first and his second education, had implanted in him. Religion, it must be admitted, had aggravated the evil. This is, assuredly, the most singular side of Amiel. This Hegelian to the last degree, this Buddhist, this rationalist, perfectly convinced of the non-existence of the unrevealed supernatural, followed the established cult. The traces of the sermons of Saint Peter of Geneva are frequently encountered in his thoughts. Amiel is not only a Protestant, he is an orthodox Protestant, extremely opposed to liberal Protestantism. He speaks of sin, of salvation, of redemption, of conversion, as though they were realities. Sin, in particular, engrosses his attention, saddens him—him; the best of men, who less than anyone else could know what it is. He reproaches me forcibly for not taking it sufficiently into account, and he asks himself two or three times: "What does M. Renan

do with sin?" As I said the other day, in my native town, I really believe that I suppress it, in fact. That is the great difference between Catholic and Protestant education. Those who, like myself, have received a Catholic education, have preserved profound vestiges of it. But these vestiges are not dogmas; they are dreams. When that great curtain of cloth of gold, striped with silk, cotton, and calico, with which Catholicism masks from us the view of the world; when this great curtain, I say, has once been rent, one beholds the universe in its infinite splendor, nature in its lofty and complete majesty. The most liberal Protestant often retains some sadness, a foundation of intellectual austerity analogous to the Slavic pessimist. It is one thing to smile at the life of such a mythological saint; it is quite another thing to preserve the imprint of those terrible mysteries which have saddened so many souls, and those of the best. What is odd, in fact, is that it is the souls which are the most foreign to sin which torment themselves the most with it, search persistently for it, and, under the pretext of extirpating an evil which they have not, dissect themselves, tear themselves perpetually with blows of the scalpel.

Moreover, there was in Amiel's religious attitude something more than the memories of childhood. He must have learned those fine feats of strength which permit one to deny everything speculatively, only to affirm everything practically, at Berlin, from

old Marheineke, or from some one of his pupils. Afterward it only grew and added embellishments. The strangest intellectual paradox with which philosophical Germany has astonished us is the eccentric pretension of a certain school to found religion upon the postulate of pessimism. Have we not lately seen M. Hartmann, the same M. Hartmann who declares explicitly that creation is an error, and that the hypothesis of nothingness would have been better than the hypothesis of being, find at the same time that religion is necessary, and that it has for its base the evil inherent in human nature?

"Religion," writes M. Hartmann, "has its source in the fact that the human mind comes into collision with evil, with sin, and because, in consequence, it aspires to explain them, and, as much as possible, to conquer them. The man who asks himself, 'How shall I manage to endure evil? How shall I succeed in reconciling my tortured conscience with it?'—that man is on the road to religion. Whether one places the accent upon evil or upon sin, it is always discontent with the world which leads to religion. If the painful impressions caused by evil and sin do not weigh sufficiently heavy in the scale of the balance to surmount, in a durable manner, the agreeable impressions of worldly life, the religious impulses of the mind will be only passing caprices. . . . . It is only when bitter doubt in relation to evil and the agony of

moral culpability have dominated worldly satisfactions and formed the general current of existence; it is only when the pessimistic sentiment has gained the upper hand that religion can establish itself in the soul in a durable manner. Where this pessimistic direction of the mind is not found religion cannot grow, at least spontaneously."

Here, indeed, is the antipodes of our ideas. We think, the best of us, that one is religious when one is content with the good God and with one's self; and now it appears that one is religious when one is in a bad humor, and when one has committed sins! . . . . I no longer understand it in the least. Day by day I grow more disgusted with transcendentalism, and I am coming to believe that the French solution, which is contained in liberty, and which is destined to end, gradually, in the separation of religions and the state, is, in the present condition of the human mind, the only rational solution. Liberalism terminates nothing, no doubt; but it is precisely on this point that it is right, or, at least, it is on this point that it is the sole practical expedient in the presence of that individualism in belief which has become the law of our times.

Superior minds frequently have to guard themselves against these reactionary tendencies, masked beneath appearances of profound philosophy. As they soar very high in the region of the atmosphere where ideas unfold, and where are formed the great currents of air which waft them, they

imagine that they can couple the clouds at their will, and, like Æolus, force the wind to blow where they please. These fine aërial strategies have something touching about them, but also something pretentious. A man desires to be the lancet which strikes and which cures; after having cleverly cut the root of moral and religious beliefs, he wishes to figure as the restorer of them; after the reader has passed through the alarms of skepticism, he finds that, thank God, all is safe and sound. And in connection with this subject, I cannot help thinking of our eminent thinker M. Lachelier, the inventor of the most surprising circular philosophical movement of modern times after Kant. After having applied to all the operations of the mind a criticism so corrosive that it leaves almost nothing behind it, on arriving at the final bounds of nihilism he turns completely round. One sad thought suffices to make him discover that he is a perfect Christian. This reconstruction of Christianity on the basis of pessimism is one of the most striking intellectual symptoms of our day. It is so difficult to deprive one's self of the support of an established religion that, after having destroyed the churches of granite, people build churches of old plaster. This reminds me of the church of Ferney, which now serves as a hay barn, with the inscription: *Deo erexit Voltaire*—Voltaire erected this to God.

What is very remarkable is that the elements of

this pessimistic Christianity, by which people imagine that they can make religion flourish once more in the world, are drawn solely from Saint Paul. Jesus and the preaching of the Gallilean are forgotten; one no longer knows what the sun of the kingdom of God is. I confess that the dogma of original sin is the one for which I have the least taste. There is not another dogma which is built, like that one, on the point of a needle. The tale of Adam's sin is found in only one of the editions whose alternate pages compose the tissues of Genesis. If the Elohist edition alone had come down to us, there would have been no original sin. The Jehovist narrative of the first fault, a very beautiful narrative, by the way, and, relatively, very ancient, was never noticed by the ancient people of Israel. Saint Paul was the first to draw from it the frightful dogma which, for centuries, has filled humanity with sadness and terror. It is quite true that this may have been powerful in its day, that Protestantism in particular, in order that it might have the right to suppress much more gross and abusive dross, may have been right in laying emphasis on those austere beliefs, which, by placing men in absolute dependence upon God and Jesus Christ removed him from the priest and the official Church; but why should rational minds, like ourselves, retain such fictions? If we admit the part of the supernatural contained in original sin and in the redemption, I do not see why we halt there. The ques-

tion is to find out whether the supernatural exists. When one has recognized its existence, there is no reason for bargaining about quantity.

Has this dogma of sin, at least the advantage of accounting, in a more or less symbolical manner, for the great facts of the history of human society? No, certainly not. Do we desire to say that physical and moral evil are superabundant, that man does not attain his goal, which is the realization of a society in some small degree just, only by dint of continual efforts? Oh! that is true, no doubt. But that is giving to the expression of an evident fact a mythological and inexact turn. The world reveals to us, with a complete absence of a well-digested plan, a spontaneous effort, like that of the embryo, toward life and consciousness. The world, or, to speak in a more limited manner, the planet which we inhabit, draws or will draw from the capital which has been allotted to it, the *summum* of what can be extracted from it. To demand of the universe and of each one of its bodies that they shall realize, on the first start, absolute perfection, is to demand of it a flagrant contradiction. Good is obtained by the obscure consciousness of the universe only in consideration of a certain quantity of evil. To be or not to be, the choice is open. But from the moment that the universe has decided —and I think that it has done very well—in favor of being and for conscience, the compensating dose of evil is absolutely inevitable.

The metamorphosis of animals is a fit of pain. Pain is the perpetual warning of life, the incitement to all progress. Why does the insect aspire to disembarrass himself of an organ which would burden him in his new life? Because he suffers. Why does the being engendered desire to separate itself from the generating being? Because it suffers. Pain creates effort; it is salutary. Man is, evidently, the special being, which is the most elevated that we can know. His astonishing prerogatives are purchased by harsh conditions. The development of an organ so complicated as the human body presupposes a considerable sum of suffering. It is impossible that the child should not suffer, that the mother should not suffer, that the old man should not suffer, and, as for death, it is the absolutely necessary consequence of the self-evident law that every organism which has a beginning must have an end.

"Thou shalt bring forth children in pain," is presented by .theologians as a condemnation in consequence of a crime, but, to be more exact, it would be necessary that the actual period should have been preceded by another period in which the woman brought forth without pain, which has never existed, unless on the lowest rungs of humanity. The man of fine race is a determinate thing, a maximum obtained only by skirting precipices; a thousand causes of ruin level their aim at him, besiege him. The exquisite is a wager against the

possible. Nature, aiming at obtaining the most elevated type of animal, could not do otherwise than make the birth of such a being a crisis for the mother. Supposing that man had a head as large again as that which he has in the good races, he would kill his mother at his birth, and he would be subject to perpetual congestions. Everything in nature is the result of a balance struck between the opposing advantages and inconveniences. The lever of the arm is very disadvantageous for muscular effort; a better lever would have given us an arm like the wing of a pelican. Our heart, our spinal cord, our brain, are very fragile things; were they more solid they would be unsuited to the delicate uses to which we put them. Nature never enters upon a blind alley without exit; in order to obtain the result which she seeks, always a good one, she goes to the point where the compensating inconvenience is mortal; she behaves like a general who weighs in the balance the object and the losses necessary to attain it. She wishes the highest sum of life with the least possible suffering.

She wishes—I say it badly, no doubt; but things happen as though it were so. The definitive result of the obscure battle which is being incessantly waged for life is in favor of good. The too deficient being disappears or does not arrive at existence, the imperfect being reforms itself and aspires to a type possible in normal life. This is so true that nature troubles herself not at all about

small inconveniences. As in a state it is easier to correct great evils, ulcers which constitute a danger of death, than to extirpate the petty abuses which do not menace the existence of the social body ; so nature has not corrected in the human body those defects which shock us, but which were not of a sort to condemn the species to the impossibility of existing.

II.

Amiel's religion was in constant process of purification, but it always remained a sad religion, more analogous, on the whole, to Buddhism than to Christianity. Although he deprecates the excesses of what he terms German Sivaism, in Bahnsen, for example, he strongly recalls, in reality, the last formulas of Hartmann. Sin and deliverance, that is the sum of the theology of the modern disciples of Cakya-Mouni.

Nothing, in my opinion, could be more contrary to the ideas which are bound to prevail in the future. The sum of human happiness must be augmented. It is not of sin, of expiation, of redemption that men must be told in the future ; it is of goodness, cheerfulness, indulgence, good humor, resignation. In proportion as the hopes of the next world vanish, these transitory beings must become habituated to regard life as supportable ; otherwise they will revolt. Man can no longer be kept in repose, except by happiness. Now, in a so-

ciety which is not too badly constituted, very few people have reason to complain that they have been brought into the world. The cause of pessimism and nihilism lies in the tedium of a life which, in consequence of a defective social organization, is not worth the trouble of living. Life is of value only in proportion to its fruits ; if we wish that men should cling to it, it must be rendered savory and delectable to lead.

Amiel asks himself uneasily : " What is it that saves ? " Eh! good Heavens ! 'tis that which gives to each person his motive for living. The means of salvation are not the same for all. For one it is virtue, for another it is ardor for the truth, for another the love of art, for others still curiosity, ambition, travel, luxury, women, wealth ; in the lowest degree, morphine and alcohol. Virtuous men find their recompense in virtue itself ; those who are not virtuous have pleasure, instead.

All have the imagination, that is to say, supreme joy, enchantments which never grow old ; with the exception of a few cases of moral pathology there is no life so gloomy that some ray of sunshine does not penetrate it.

The most dangerous error, in the matter of social morality, is the systematic suppression of pleasure. Rigorously correct virtue is an aristocracy ; everybody is not equally bound thereto. He who has received the privilege of intellectual and moral nobility is obliged to belong to it ; but the good

old Gallic morality did not impose the same burdens on all; kindness, courage, gayety, confidence in the God of good men, suffice for salvation. It is necessary that the masses should amuse themselves. For my own part I feel no need of external amusement; but I do need to feel that people are amusing themselves around me; I enjoy the gayety of others. Temperance societies are founded upon excellent intentions, but upon a misunderstanding as well. I know but one argnment in their favor. Madame T. said to me one day, that the husbands in certain countries beat their wives, when they are not temperance men. That is horrible, assuredly; we must try to correct that. But instead of suppressing drunkenness for those who require it, would it not be better to try to render it gentle, amiable, accompanied by moral sentiments? There are so many men with whom the hour after intoxication is, next to the hour after love, the moment when they are at their best.

Inequality and variety are the fundamental laws of the human species. Nothing must be suppressed in the conflicting manifestations of this eccentric collective being. It has been said that it is neither angel nor beast; I would say rather, that it is both angel and beast. A being organized eternal and perfect is a contradiction. Must we for this reason reject the pencil of light which nature deals out to us in our turn? It is as though one were to refuse a cup of exquisite wine because it will soon be ex-

hausted, or a pleasure because it does not last long. There is great inequality, no doubt ; but nearly everyone has something, and the progress of human societies will constantly reduce more and more the number of the disinherited. There remains pain, which is, assuredly, an odious, humiliating thing, injurious to the noble functions of life. Man can combat it, almost suppress it, always escape it. The cases in which man is fettered to life are very rare. The only destiny to be absolutely condemned is that of the enslaved animal; of the horse, for example, who cannot commit suicide, or of those persons condemned to death, who are kept in sight, or of the demented ; but these are very exceptional situations. The immense majority of individuals have not to complain of their passage through being, since the balance of life is settled in joy, and since death may some day be rendered painless.

Hence the problem of the origin of evil, so painfully agitated by ancient philosophy, is not a problem. The Manichæan theory of the good God and the evil God is irrefutable in the theistic conception of the reckoning and omnipotent God. It has no longer any sense in the conception of a universe which draws from its own bosom all that it can. Evil is the absolute condition of conscious existence. The world succeeds in procuring a little of good justice, and the ideal, with myriads of egotisms. When one thinks of the road

that it has been necessary to traverse in order that, from the system of reciprocal extermination, which was the law of the primitive world, Kant's notion of the categorical imperative should emerge, one is really surprised at the wise ways which nature's policy has pursued. The order of things in which evil is of the most consequence, and in which our supreme duty is to combat it, is the human reign ; therein an infinite amount remains to be done, undeniably ; but much has also been done already. The human world is much less wicked nowadays, and much less unjust, than it was three or four thousand years ago. The general intention of the universe is benevolent. The evil which it still retains is the necessary imperfection which spontaneity cannot eliminate and which science must combat. The problem is to learn whether the hypothesis of the existence of the world was worse, as M. Hartmann maintains, than the hypothesis of non-existence. For my own part, I think that the hypothesis of being is of more value, from the simple fact that it has been realized. The world, in M. Hartmann's opinion, is an effect without a cause. Being, or consciousness, at least, began and continues in the world only because there is in being an increased value of good for the sum total of conscious individuals.

A world in which the evil should surpass the good would be a world which would not exist or which would disappear. There are very few beings, in fact,

who, when placed in the presence of destruction, have not a horror of it. They prefer existence with its miseries, to nothingness. Suicide is an extremely rare event. Even the animal which is, in appearance, the most odiously exploited by another, has its compensations. The oyster gives pleasure to the man who swallows it under conditions in which its pain must be almost nothing; and before that, for months, the man has guarded it in an oyster bed where he has protected it against all hostile beasts, and where it has enjoyed a longer and happier existence than it would have had in a state of nature. There are, we admit, some human creatures for whom, in consequence of fatal coincidences, it would have been better had they not existed. Let us hope that the cases of this sort will become more and more rare, and that they will even disappear altogether.

Nothing, then, is less well grounded than the reproaches which pessimists indulge in toward the spirit of benevolence which, in our opinion, rules this universe. These objections land full in the breast of those pure theists, who consider the divine consciousness to be a reflective consciousness which combines things scientifically. They are unsolvable for those who cling to the ideas of the ancient theology as to the divine omnipotence. But such objections have no value as opposed to those who believe that the world is abandoned to the spontaneous play of its own forces. Nature is

like a boiler at high pressure; it gives off everything which is not retained by the wall of the impossible. In reality, what the pessimists demand, what they conceive as the ideal of a perfect world, is a world of miracles, a world where the *deus ex machina* should intervene incessantly, to correct, in detail, the defects which he has not been able to foresee in the lump. That which possesses them all is the anthropocentric error, the artless fatuity of man judging the world from the point of view of his comfort, as though the ant should set up its theory of the universe, taking into account only the needs of its little circle.

Amiel has too just a sense to allow himself to indulge in the exaggerations of the school, void of tact, which has sprung from the clever Schopenhauer. Amiel is a poet, and he has a lively love for nature. He understands half of Goethe; then the fundamental contradiction of his being gets the upper hand.

"Goethe ignores sanctity, and would never reflect upon the terrible problem of evil. . . . . He never reached the sentiment of obligation and of sin." The idealistic Manichæism is all the more singular in Amiel since he fully admits the rights of æstheticism. Now, the singular fact of admitting in nature a sort of coquetry is full of consequences. If Nature were wicked she would be

ugly. Beauty is the adornment which both flower and animal assume with a view to love. In this adornment of the plant and the animal there is never a fault in the design, there is never a crude or badly assorted color. Nature has taste; only she does not go as far as morals; she does not go beyond love.

That is why, in the eyes of reason, she is so often unjust and immoral. We feel an irresistible need for assuming in the government of the world the justice of which we find the dictates in our hearts; and, as it has been plainly proved that this justice does not exist in the reality of the universe, we come to exact absolutely, as a condition of morality, the survival of each human consciousness beyond the tomb. Here shines forth the supreme contradiction between nature and reason. Such a postulate is, in fact, the most necessary thing *a priori* and the most impossible *a posteriori*. The thesis of the "Phædo" is only a subtlety. I much prefer the Judæo-Christian system of the resurrection. The resurrection would be a miracle and cannot be conceived in the present state of the world, where we perceive above material facts only this poor humanity, still so weak, and a general, obscure conscience which is utterly heedless of individuals. Reason is not all-powerful now; it endures flagrant injustices which it cannot

prevent. But if we could suppose that it were all-powerful, nothing would then hinder its being just, and just retrospectively for the ages when justice has not been possible. In a word, God is already good; but he is not omnipotent; he will be so some day, no doubt. God already does what he can for justice; one of these days, when he shall have at his disposal the capital of the entire universe, he will be able to do all things. In that way, one might imagine a grand reparation, and, as a slumber of a million centuries is not longer than the slumber of an hour, the reign of justice which we have loved will appear to us the immediate continuation of the hour of death.

The resurrection would thus be the final act of the world, the act of an omnipotent and omniscient God, capable of being just and wishing to be so. Immortality would not be as Plato would have it; that is a gift inherent in man, a consequence of his nature; it would be a gift reserved by the Being, become absolute, perfect, all-powerful, for those who should have contributed to its development. It would be an exception, a divine selection, a recompense accorded by the triumphant good and true, to the only consciousness of the past in which the love of the good and the true should have reigned. It would be, in short, a miracle; that is to say, a well-meditated, divine act; such acts, of which we do not, at present, know a single example, would become the law of the universe on the day

when the being should arrive at perfect consciousness.

I sometimes try to imagine for myself a sermon suitable for All Saints' Day—the most eternal of religious anniversaries—delivered a thousand years hence, when man will, perchance, have already caught a glimpse of the secret of immortality. Is it not remarkable that the festival of All Saints, inseparable from the festival of the dead, should be the only anniversary which the populace have retained? In the melancholy with which we think of the elect of the less favored ages, there lies hidden a sort of pious effort to restore them to life. We are obliged to think that everything which has existed still exists somewhere in an image which can be revivified. The negatives of all things are preserved. The stars at the extreme ends of the universe are receiving, at the present moment, the image of deeds which took place centuries ago. The imprints of everything which has existed live, arranged in degrees, in the diverse zones of infinite space. It remains for the supreme photographer to strike off fresh copies from them. Surely he will resuscitate only that which has served the ends of the good, and, consequently, of the true. That will be our recompense. Inferior souls will have had theirs in the low enjoyments which they have sought.

These are the questions which I should have so much liked to discuss with poor Amiel, if I had had the pleasure of knowing him. On page 123 of

Volume II, I think that he is rather unjust to me. He is indignant that, when I treat of such topics, I sometimes allow of smiles and irony. Well, in that point I think that I am tolerably philosophical. Complete obscurity, which is, perhaps, providential, conceals from us the moral objects of the universe. On this matter one makes bets ; one draws lots ; in reality, one knows nothing. Our wager, our real *acierto* in the Spanish fashion, the inward inspiration which makes us affirm duty, is a sort of oracle, an infallible voice, coming from without, and corresponding to an objective reality. We stake our nobility on this obstinate affirmation ; we do well : we must cling to it, even in the face of evidence. But there are almost as many chances that the exact contrary may prove true. It is possible that these inward voices proceed from honest illusions upheld by habit, and that the world is merely an amusing fairy spectacle, which is not in charge of any god at all. Hence, we must so arrange matters for ourselves that, in either hypothesis, we may not be wholly in the wrong. We must listen to the higher voices, but in such a manner that, in case the second hypothesis prove the true one, we may not be too thoroughly duped. If, in fact, the world is not a serious thing, it is the dogmatic people who will turn out to have been frivolous, and the worldly people, those whom the theologians treat as giddypates, who will have been the genuinely wise.

What seems advisable, under the circumstances,

is a double-edged wisdom, equally ready for the two eventualities of the dilemma, a middle course in which, in one fashion or another, we shall not be obliged to say: *Ergo erravimus*—Therefore we have gone astray. It is, above all, for the sake of others that we must be scrupulous in this matter. A man may run great risks on his own account; but he has not the right to gamble for others. When a man has souls in his charge, he must express himself with a good deal of reserve so that, in the hypothesis of a grand bankruptcy, those whom he has compromised may find that they have not been too much victimized.

In utrumque paratus!—To be ready for everything—therein, perhaps, lies wisdom. The way to be sure that one has been in the right, for a few moments at least, is to abandan one's self, by turns, to confidence, to skepticism, to optimism, to irony. You will say to me that by this means one will not turn out to have been completely in the right. No doubt; but as there is not the slightest chance that the grand prize in this lottery is reserved for anyone, it is prudent to confine one's self to more modest pretensions. Well! that state of soul which M. Amiel disdainfully designates as "the epicurism of the imagination" is, perhaps for that very reason, not so bad a course. Gayety has this one very philosophical thing about it, that it seems to say to nature that we do not take her any more seriously than she takes us; if the world is a bad farce, we

shall turn it into a good farce by dint of gayety. On the other hand, if an indulgent and benevolent thought does preside over the universe, we enter into the intentions of this supreme thought far better by joyous resignation than by the sullen rigidity of the sectary and the eternal lament of the believer.

"Banter hypocrisies ; but speak in a straightforward way to honest men," Amiel says to me with a certain acerbity. Good Heavens! honest men are often exposed to the danger of being hypocrites without knowing it! It is said that Socrates invented irony. If this be true, it must be confessed that the sage of Athens has uttered the final word of philosophy. We no longer admit, in truth, of philosophy being spoken of otherwise than with a smile. We owe virtue to the Eternal ; but we have the right to couple irony with it, by way of personal reprisals. By this method we return pleasantry for pleasantry to the person to whom it is due ; we play the trick which has been played on us. Saint Augustine's remark : *Domine, si error est, a te decepti sumus*—Lord, if there be an error, we have been deceived by Thee—still remains very beautiful, very much in conformity with modern sentiments. Only, we desire the Eternal to feel that, if we accept the cheat, we accept it with full knowledge and voluntarily. We are resigned beforehand to lose the interests of our virtuous investments ; but we should not like to be exposed to the ridicule

of seeming to have reckoned much upon them. By speaking of all this in a positive manner, we fear to appear to have fallen too readily into the trap set for our simplicity.

Such was, moreover, Amiel's final conclusion. A few weeks before his death he perceived wisdom. On the last leaves of his journal we find the following beautiful page :

" For many years, the immanent God has been more actual to me than the transcendent God ; the religion of Jacob has been stranger to me than that of Kant or even of Spinoza. The entire Semitic dramaturgy has appeared to me a work of the imagination. The apostolic documents have changed their value and their sense in my eyes. Belief and truth have differentiated themselves with ever-increasing clearness. Religious psychology has become a simple phenomenon, and has lost its fixed and nominal value. The apologetics of Pascal, of Leibnitz, of Secretan, seem to me no more proof positive than those of the Middle Ages, for they assume that which is in question, a revealed doctrine, a definite and immutable Christianity. It seems to me that that which remains to me, from all my studies, is a new phenomenology of the mind, the intuition of the universal metamorphosis ; all private convictions, all principles concerning it, all acknowledged formulas, all non-fusible ideas are only prejudices useful to practice, but proofs of narrowness of mind. The absolute of detail is absurd and contradictory. Political, religious, æsthetic, literary, parties are ankylosis of the thought. Every special belief constitutes a rigidity and an obtuseness, but this consistence is

necessary in its own season. Our monad, in so far as it is thinking, clears the limits of time, of space, and of historic surroundings; but, in so far as it is individual, and for the sake of doing something, it adapts itself to current illusions, and sets a definite goal for itself."

These lines were written on February 4, 1881. Amiel died on the 11th of May, of the same year. He had his defects; but he certainly was one of the strongest speculative brains which reflected upon matters in the period from 1845 to 1880. The form which he selected for the exposition of his thought—a manuscript journal of 16,000 pages—was the most disadvantageous possible. Thanks to the posthumous care of his friends, thanks to M. Scherer, who has set forth most perfectly, in a profound study, the fine character of that life, Amiel's thought will appear, to all those who take an interest in the problems of philosophy, as clear and complete as though he had understood how to make a book; that is to say, to limit himself.

A PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

I.

THE first duty of the sincere man is not to influence his own opinions, to allow reality to reflect itself in him as in the dark chamber of the photographer, and to assist in the character of spectator

at the inward battles which ideas carry on in the depths of his conscience. We should not interfere in this spontaneous labor; we should remain passive before the internal modifications of our intellectual retina. Not that the result of the unconscious revolution should be a matter of indifference to us and that it should not yield to serious consequences; but we have not the right to hold a desire when reason speaks; we should listen, nothing more; ready to allow ourselves to be borne, bound hand and foot, whither the best arguments carry us. The production of the truth is an objective phenomenon, bound to the Ego, which takes place within us without our aid, a sort of chemical precipitate which we must content ourselves with contemplating with curiosity. It is good to pause from time to time, to withdraw into one's self for reflection; to examine in what way the manner in which we regard the world may have been modified, what progress the ladder leading from probability to certainty, the propositions which we have made the base of our life, may have made.

One thing absolutely beyond doubt is, that in the universe which is accessible to our experience, we do not observe and we never have observed any passing fact which proceeds from a will, or from wills superior to that of man. The general constitution of the world is filled with intentions, apparent intentions at least; but in the facts in detail

there is nothing intentional. That which is attributed to angels, to *daimones*, to particular provincial planetary gods, or even to one sole God working by special volitions, has no reality. In our day, nothing of this sort can be established. Written texts, if we take them seriously, would make us believe that such facts did occur in former times; but historical criticism demonstrates the slight credibility of such narrations. If the rule of special volitions had been the law at any epoch of the world, one would be able to perceive some remnant, some shred of such a government in the actual state. Now, the present actual state of things presents no trace of any action coming from without. The state which we have before us is the result of a development whose beginning we do not see; in the innumerable links of this chain, we do not discover a single free action, before the appearance of man, or, if the expression is preferred, of human beings. Since the appearance of man there has been a free cause which has made use of the forces of nature for definite ends; but this cause emanates from itself, from nature; it is nature recovering herself, attaining consciousness. What has never been beheld is the intervention of a superior agent to correct or direct the blind forces, to enlighten or ameliorate man, to prevent a frightful calamity, to hinder an injustice, to prepare the way for the execution of a given plan. The character of absolute precision of the world which we

call material, would suffice to set aside the idea of intention, since the intentional, nearly always, manifests itself by the lack of geometrical accuracy and mere approach to perfection.

What we have just said applies with a sort of experimental certainty to the planet Earth, whose history is sufficiently well known to us to prevent any great peculiarity of its government escaping our notice. We can apply it without hesitation to the sun and to the whole solar system, which form, in company with ourselves, only a single, small cosmos. We can even apply it to the whole sidereal system which is revealed to the inhabitants of the earth, thanks to the transparency of air and space.* In spite of the distances, surpassing all imagination, which separate these different bodies from each other and from us, we have been able to verify the fact that the physical forces, the mechanism, the chemistry of these bodies are identical with those of the solar system. There is no doubt that they, like the solar system, follow the laws of a development which contains within itself its own causes. In any case, were it otherwise, the *onus probandi*—the burden of proof—would lie with those who should maintain the contrary, in virtue of the principle that we must not discuss as possible that which no indication leads us to assume. Every indication, however slight, should be fol-

* This is what I designate as universe, throughout all of this article.

lowed up by science with zeal. But gratuitous assertion needs no refutation—*Quod gratis asseritur gratis negatur.*

As we do not perceive above us any trace of intelligence acting with a view to determinate ends, so we perceive none below us. The ant, although very small, is more intelligent than the horse ; but if, in the microbic order, there were very intelligent beings, we should perceive them through the acts of reflection emanating from them. Now the action of these tiny beings, who are the cause of nearly all morbid phenomena, is of such short range that a very advanced state of science has been required to perceive it ; at the present moment, their action is still almost confounded with chemical and mechanical forces. So far as our experience goes, though it is restricted, no doubt, intelligence appears limited to the realm of the finite : above and below all is night.

We may then assume, as a thesis, the proposition that the *fieri* by internal development, without intervention from the exterior, is the law of the whole universe which we behold. An infinite number of blows makes everything come to pass, and causes the ends attained by chance to seem to have been attained by volition. Our universe, within the reach of our experiment, is not governed by any intelligent reason. God, as the common herd understand him, the living God, the acting God, the God-Providence, does not show him-

self in it. The question is, to know whether this universe constitutes the totality of existence. Here doubt begins. The active God is absent from this universe; does he not exist beyond it?

And, in the first place, is this universe infinite? Does the golden dust, unequally distributed, which we behold above our heads, on a clear night, fill space? Is it certain that there are not stations in space whence an eye would descry, on the one hand, a sky sown with stars, like the one on which we gaze; on the other a black abyss, void of all luminous bodies? Immense this universe certainly is. But what is a decillion of leagues in comparison with infinity?

And even if it were certain that space is filled with suns, and is without limits, would it follow that there are not other infinites of a superior or inferior order? Infinitesimal calculation assuredly hinges on formulas only; but these formulas are striking symbols. There are divers orders of infinites, of which the inferior are as zero compared with the superior. This apparent paradox serves as base for the calculations of absolute truth. Every finite quantity, added to the infinite or subtracted from the infinite, is equivalent to zero; every finite quantity is nothing when compared with the infinite. Our ideas of space and of time are all relative. The distance of the earth from Sirius is enormous, according to our measurements; the interior voids of a molecule may be as con-

siderable for beings endowed with another criterion of size. The longevity of our world might, in the eyes of a god, appear the equivalent of a single day.

All seems thus composed of worlds which hardly exist, so far as the others are concerned, but which constitute the infinite for themselves. He who knows France best is ignorant of what is going on in a thousand little provincial centers; he who knows one of these little centers sees nothing beyond, and finds it composed of still smaller centers, each one of which beholds only itself. Worlds inclosing worlds, the infinitely small of the one being the infinitely great of another—that is the truth of the matter. Our reality—that in which we live, which is for us the finite—is composed of infinites of an inferior order; it serves itself to make superior infinites. It is an infinitely great for him who is beneath, an infinitely small for him who is above, a medium between the two infinites.

We see little of the order of the infinite which is beyond us; but the order of the infinite which is below us, the world of the atom, of the cell of the microbe composed of microbes, exists with as much certainty as the order of the finite, which is the habitual subject of our researches and of our meditations. The negatives of the memory, those innumerable little images which we can dust off and call to life again at will, are contained beneath the osseous casket of our skull, in a very limited space,

The types of generation, inclosed one in another, like the germ of a flower in a bud, are another example of the infinite flexibility of space, or of its relativity.* The atom may contain an infinite. The coal which maintains warmth in our fireplaces is composed of little worlds which our world employs; perhaps we are the atom of carbon which maintains the warmth of another world. We do not behold God in this universe; atheism is logical and fatal in this case; but this universe is, perhaps, subordinate; possibly one is an atheist because one does not see far enough. Do endless circles command each other, or does a fixed and immovable absolute unite the infinite zones of the variable and mutable, according to the beautiful biblical formula: *Tu autem idem ipse est, et anni tui non deficiunt?*—For Thou art the same, and Thy years fail not. We know absolutely nothing about it.

It is in the comparison of the atom with the universe that infinitesimal considerations receive their just application. Relatively to the order of grandeurs in which we live, the atom is an infinitely small thing, a zero. Relatively to the size below the atom is infinitely great. The atom is for us a point of resistance: the conception of the atom as a solid *plenum*, as small as one pleases, must be

* The considerations of modern geometry upon space having more than three dimensions are, perhaps, connected with the reality in this case.

set aside, it seems; since the indivisible plenum does not exist in nature. Our universe, although composed of bodies which leave immense empty spaces between them, is, in reality, impenetrable. Let us assume that an arrow is shot with infinite force from the confines of the universe; that arrow would not traverse the universe, thinly scattered as it is in appearance; it would encounter bodies without number which would stop it; just as a bullet could not pass through a cloud without getting wet.

An atom of a simple body, an atom of gold, for example, can thus be conceived as a universe, whose different components, far from forming a solid plenum, would be as widely separated from each other as the different centers of solar systems. Impenetrability would result from the internal invariability of such a body which no natural or scientific means has, so far, been able to assail. The unassailable character of the simple body would be analogous to the stability of the laws of our universe, or rather, to the absence of special wills in the government of this universe. The absence of all external intervention, in the order of things which we see, would answer to the fact that no chemist has succeeded, up to the present, in destroying that grouping of an infinite primordial force which constitutes an atom.

Hence, it is not exact to say: "The universe which we see is eternal," any more than it is exact

to say: "The atom is eternal." The atom has had a beginning—a phenomenon which has had a beginning, it will come to an end. That which has never had a beginning and which will never have an end is the all-absolute, it is God. Metaphysics is a science which has but one line: "Something exists; hence, something has existed from all eternity"; such an affirmation is equivalent to "no effect without a cause," an assertion which certainly contains an element of experimentalism. But, between this primordial existence and the world which we see, there are infinite intervals. The world which we see, and the atom of a simple body have, perhaps, existed, for decillions of decillions of centuries; or, what amounts to the same thing, for decillions of decillions of centuries no special will has assailed either our universe or the atom. As the human imagination does not grasp the difference between the infinite and the indefinite, this suffices for the certainties which we require. We cannot distinguish between the probability of a milliard against one and certainty. The induction: "The sun rose to-day, hence it will rise to-morrow," gives us full security; that great fabric of approximations to things, which constitutes human life, finds a more solid base than itself in this fact that, never, to our knowledge, have the laws of nature been infringed.

But, because this has not happened, at least within an enormous period, have we a right to conclude that it never will happen? Perhaps the

world is the toy of a Superior Being, the experimental piece of a transcendent savant, who possesses the final secrets of being. Will some chemist of genius succeed, one of these days, in decomposing the simple atom or in suppressing it? Until the eve of the day when such a discovery shall be made, the consciousnesses which may exist in the atom * will say, as we say: "the world is immutable, eternal," and at the moment of the discovery, they will recognize their error. In the same way, a Superior Being may, one day, direct an attack upon the law of stability of our universe, without much more concern for the beings which dwell there than the laborer who hacks apart a clod of earth concerns himself about the insects who may be living out their little lives in it. Without going into the profundities of chemical action, let us take as the object of our meditation such an atom lost among the masses of granite which form the substratum of our shores. It has been in existence for thousands of centuries, and, if there are in that atom sentient beings their opinion must be that their world, so tiny for us, so great for them, is impenetrable, infinite, autono-

* The atom is no more conscious than the universe; nothing proves it, at least; but, just as the universe, unconscious as a whole, contains consciousnesses—that of man, for example—which do not make themselves felt in the whole; so the atom may contain, in its elements, twice as infinitely small, in comparison with us, consciousnesses which do not make themselves felt in the whole.

mous, alive in itself. They would be mistaken, nevertheless. Opposite the coast of Brittany, where I am writing these lines,* I used to behold in my childhood an island, Grand Island, which has now almost completely disappeared. M. Haussmann caused it to disappear; the masses of granite of which it was composed at the present moment form the sidewalks of the boulevards in Paris, which were constructed under the Second Empire. When the mine began to work in those depths, the astonishment of the millions of milliards of tiny worlds which lay hidden there from us, in a shadow which was absolute to us, must have been very great. And only the granitic universes situated at the points of fracture could have noticed anything. In the interior of the slabs which we tread underfoot in Paris, slumber millions of universes, as tranquil in their error touching the autonomy of their world as when they formed part of the cliffs of Brittany. The light will dawn for them only on the day when they are reduced to macadam.

The surprise experienced by the little universes of the granite cliffs of Grand Island, the surprise which the world contained in an atom of gold would experience if the gold were dissolved, may be in store for us. A God may reveal himself one of these days. The eternity of our universe is no longer assured, from the moment that we have a

* September 2, 1888.

right to suppose that it is a finite, subordinated to an infinite. The superior infinite may dispose of it, utilize it, apply it to its ends. "Nature and its author" is not, perhaps, so absurd an expression as it seems. Everything is possible—even God. The history of the universe has never shown, someone may object, so far as man can know, any reason for forming such an hypothesis. No doubt; but the atoms of the deep-lying layers of granite on Grand Island were also a very long time in perceiving the existence of humanity. God does not make appearances in the world which we can measure and observe; but we cannot prove that he does not make them in the infinity of time. Man does not see falsely, as subjective skeptics suppose; he sees in a narrow way. His universe is great and old, no doubt; it is a in the formula $x+z$, and in this case, $a=0$.

Hence, it is not impossible that outside the universe which we know—finite or infinite, it matters not which—there is an infinite of another order, in which our universe is only an atom. This infinite, which would be God * for us, may reveal itself only at intervals, in our estimation extremely long, but insignificant in the bosom of the absolute. From this point of view, the existence of a God with special volitions, who does not appear in our

* I speak in a relative sense. A being which infinitely surpasses us and discloses himself to us by special intentional acts, would be God for us, as man is the god of the animal.

universe, may be considered possible in the womb of the infinite, or, at least, it is as rash to deny it as to affirm it.

II.

The innumerable individual consciousnesses which the planet Earth has produced, which the other planets, the other suns may have produced, certainly have the air of being destined to remain inclosed, as in a capsule, in the universe to which they have belonged. The renewal of these consciousnesses would constitute a miracle, as those theologians have thought who have maintained that the soul of man is immortal, not in its nature, but through a special volition of God. In the surroundings which we are experimenting upon, miracles do not take place; but, from the point of view of the infinite, nothing is impossible. It is very curious that the Jews, who, without entertaining the least belief in an immortal soul, have contributed the most toward disseminating the ideas as to future recompenses, under the form of belief in the kingdom of God and the resurrection, formed an analogous image, conceiving the apparitions of divine justice as intermittent, and the awakening of the just as a miracle wrought directly by God. This was, assuredly, better than the sophisms of the "Phædo." The infinity of the future settles many difficulties. If God exists, he must be good, and he will end by being just. Man would thus

be immortal in the infinite, to infinity. The two great postulates of human life, God and the immortality of the soul, which are gratuitous assumptions from the point of view of the finite in which we live, are, perhaps, true, within the limits of the infinite.

As time, in fact, exists only in a wholly relative manner, a sleep of a decillion years is no longer than a sleep of an hour. Paradise does not exist; perhaps it will exist, in a decillion of years. Those whom a tardy justice will place there, once more, will think that they died the day before. As in the legend of the Middle Ages, when they feel of their death-bed, they will find it still warm. To have been is to be. Consecutiveness is the absolute condition of our spirit; but, in the object, consecutiveness and simultaneousness are confounded. From this point of view, a display of fireworks is eternal. My grandson, who is five years old, amuses himself so well in the country that his only grief consists in being obliged to go to bed. "Mamma," he asks his mother, "will the night be long to-day?" When, in the presence of death, we ask ourselves: "Will this night be long?" we are no less artless.

Here the mystery is absolute; we do feel within us the voice of another world, but we do not know what that world is. What does this voice tell us? Things that are tolerably clear. Whence comes that voice? Nothing is more obscure. This voice

makes itself heard by us through unexplained inclinations, impalpable pleasures, little elfin airs, fugitive, intangible, which insinuate to us devotion, which render us capable of duty, inspire us with courage, make us experience the seductions of beauty. It bursts forth, above all, in those sublime absurdities in which one becomes entangled, knowing all the while that one is making a very bad bargain, in those four grand follies of man, love, religion, poetry, virtue; providentially useless things which the egotistical man denies, and which, in spite of him, lead the world. It is when we listen to these divine voices that we really hear the harmony of the celestial spheres, the music of the infinite. *Præstet fides supplementum sensuum defectui*— Let faith supply that in which sense is deficient.

Love is the first of these great revelatory instincts which rule all creation, and which seem to have been imposed by a supreme will.* Its great excellence lies in the fact that all beings participate

* It is surprising that science and philosophy, adopting the frivolous system of people of the world of treating the case, which is mysterious above all others, as a simple matter for pleasantries, should not have made of love the capital object of their researches and their speculations. It is the most extraordinary and the most suggestive fact of the universe. Through a prudery which has no sense in the system of philosophical reflection, people do not mention it, or confine themselves to a few foolish platitudes. People will not see that they are in the presence of the nodal point of things, in the presence of the most profound secret in the world. The fear of fools should

in it, and that we clearly perceive its connection with the ends of the universe. Its first nest appears to have been in the origins of life, in the cell. The beginning of the duality of the sexes communicated to it a direction which thenceforth never underwent change, and produced marvelous blossomings. The dissonance of the two sexes, uniting at a certain height in a divine consonance, whence is born the perfect accord of creation, is the fundamental faith of the world. In the vegetable kingdom, these mysterious aspirations are summed up in the flower—the flower, that unrivaled problem, before which our giddiness passes with stupid inattention; the flower, a language splendid or charming, but absolutely enigmatical, which seems, indeed, an act of adoration from the earth to an invisible lover, according to a rite which remains always the same. The tiny flower, in fact, which man hardly sees, is as perfect as the great one. Nature employs the same coquetry in its fabrication; the same being is reflected in both.

not, however, prevent that which is serious from being treated seriously. Physiologists will see nothing in it but that which is connected with the play of the organs. I spoke one day to Claude Bernard of the deep significance contained in the fact of sexual attraction. He answered me, after a momentary reflection: "No; they are clearly defined functions, consequences of nutrition." Very good; but, in that case, let a science be founded which shall occupy itself with the obscure consequences of the clearly defined functions. Why, for example, has the flower perfume?

In the bosom of the animal kingdom, the equivalent of the flower is the intoxication of joy of the child, the beauty of the young girl, that gleam of a day, that luminous exudation which, like the phosphorescence of the glowworm, shows the feverish ardor of a life aspiring to its blossoming. Like the flower, beauty is impersonal; the effort of the individual counts for nothing here. It is born, appears for a moment, vanishes, like a natural phenomenon. Nature in her entirety is herself a great flower full of harmony. One finds therein no fault of design. "It is we," people say, "who put this harmony into it." How does it happen, then, that man so often spoils nature? The world is beautiful until man touches it; absurdities, awkwardnesses, bad taste, false colors, crudities, deformities, vileness begin with the appearance of man in this paradise, hitherto immaculate.

With the animal love has been the principle of beauty. It is because, at that moment, the male bird makes a supreme effort to please, that his colors are more vivid, and his form better outlined.* With man, love has been a school of gentleness and courtesy. I will add, of religion and morals. An hour when the most wicked being experiences an impulse of tenderness, when

* Things have been overturned by humanity. The true analogue of the beauty of the male is the modesty of the female. A little air of reserve, of timidity, of touching subjection, has finally become more attractive to man than beauty.

the narrowest individual has the sentiment of intimate communion with the universe is, assuredly, a divine hour. It is because, at that hour, man hears the voice of nature, that in it he contracts lofty duties, takes sacred vows, tastes supreme joys, or prepares for himself acute remorse. In any case, it is the hour in his fugitive life when man is at his best. The immense sensation which he experiences when he thus emerges, in a manner, from himself, shows that he really comes in contact with the infinite. Love, understood in a lofty way, is thus a religious thing, or rather, a part of religion. Could one believe that frivolity and folly have succeeded in causing this ancient remnant of relationship with nature to be regarded as a shameful remains of animalism? Is it possible that so holy an aim as that of continuing the species could have been attached to a culpable or ridiculous act? One attributes to the Eternal, by this supposition, a grotesque intention or a veritable piece of buffoonery.

The serious character of love has been obliterated by levity. Duty is surely something from above, since it is accompanied by no pleasure and often entails harsh sacrifices. And nevertheless, man clings to it almost as much as to love. Man is grateful when he is furnished with reasons for believing in devotion; to prove duty to him is to find his titles of nobility for him once more. One is not welcome when one proposes to deliver him

from it. The care of the animal for its offspring, a multitude of facts which show us the need of sacrifice in consciences the most egotistical in appearance, prove that very few beings avoid the commandments established by nature in view of ends for which they themselves care very little. Duty and the instincts for building a nest and hatching, in the bird, have the same providential origin. Even in the most vulgar life, the share of what is done for God is enormous. The most degraded being prefers to be just rather than unjust ; we all adore, we all pray many times in the day, without knowing it.

Whence come those voices, now sweet, now austere? They come from the universe, from God, if you like. The universe, with which we are connected as by an umbilical cord, will have devotion, duty, virtue ; in order to attain its ends, it employs religion, poetry, love, pleasure, all sorts of deceptions. And what the universe wills, it will always compel ; for it possesses unprecedented ruses to support its decrees. The most self-evident courses of reasoning of the critics will not be able to do anything toward demolishing these sacred illusions. Women, in particular, will always offer resistance ; we may say what we will, they will not believe us, and we are delighted at it. That which is in us, without our own will and in spite of ourselves, the unconscious, in a word, is the revelation above all others. Religion, the summing up of moral needs,

of man's virtue, modesty, disinterestedness, sacrifice, are the voice of the universe. Everything is contained in an act of faith to instincts which assail us, without convincing us; in obedience to a language coming from the infinite, a language perfectly clear, as to what it commands us, obscure as to what it promises. We see the charm; we baffle it; but it will never be broken, for all that. *Quis posuit in visceribus hominis sapientiam?*—Who has placed understanding in the bowels of man?

Of this supreme resultant of the total universe we can say only one thing, that it is good. For, if it were not good, the total universe, which has existed from all eternity, would have been destroyed. Let us suppose a banking house which has existed from all eternity. If this house had the least defect in its basis, it would have suffered bankruptcy a thousand times. If the balance of the world were not liquidated by a surplus to the profit of the shareholders, the world would have ceased to exist long ago. A profit, a favorable remainder is the result of this immense balancing of the ledgers of good and evil. This surplus of good is the reason for the universe's existence, and for its preservation. Why be, if there is no profit in being? It is so easy not to be.

I regard as superficial the objections which some learned men raise against finality, by calling attention to certain imperfections of nature, defects of the human body, for example, such and such a

muscle which constitutes a lever of the least effective sort, the eye constructed with a singular approximation only to what it should be. One forgets that the conditions of creation, if one may express one's self thus, are limited by the balancing of conflicting advantages and inconveniences. It is a curve determined beforehand by the asesmbling of its co-ordinates, and written in advance in an abstract equation. A better lever to the forearm would have given us the conformation of pelicans. An eye which should avoid the defects of the present eye would fall, probably, into more serious inconveniences still. More powerful brains than the best human brains can be conceived; but they would have entailed for those endowed with them congestions and cerebral fevers. A man who should never be ill, on the other hand, would probably be condemned to incurable mediocrity. A humanity which was not revolutionary, tormented by Utopias, would resemble an ant-hill, a China which believes that it has found the perfect form and abides by it. A humanity, which was not superstitious, would cherish discouraging positivism. Now, nature possesses a sort of foresight; she does not create that which would be destined to perish through an inherent blemish. She divines the roads which have no exit, and does not entangle herself in them.

Certain inconveniences of the body are like historical abuses, which the progress of evolution

has not taken an interest in reforming. When the inconvenience has been sufficiently grave to kill the individual and extinguish the species, the struggle has been to the death; the mortal blemish has been corrected, or the species has become extinct; but when the defect—for example, the useless prolongation of the cæcum—was merely of a nature to produce some maladies, some deaths, nature has not considered it worth her while to take violent measures for so small a matter. It is thus that, in a society, the extirpation of great abuses is easier than the correction of the lesser abuses; for, in the first case, it is a question of life and death; in the second, no one takes sufficient interest in the reform to engage in a radical battle. The objections of the learned men, who hold themselves on their guard against what they consider a resurrection of finalism, are directed, at bottom, against the system of a wise and omnipotent Creator. They do not bear upon our hypothesis of a profound *nisus* (pressure) exerting itself in a blind way in the abysses of being, urging all to existence, at every point in space. This *nisus* is neither conscious nor all-powerful; it puts the matter which is at its disposal to the best possible profit. Hence it is quite natural that it should not have made things which offer contradictory perfections. It is natural, also, that the part of the cosmos which we behold should present limits and gaps, arising from the insufficiency of the materials

which nature had under its control at a given point. It is the *nisus* acting upon the totality of the universe which will perhaps, some day, be conscious, omniscient, omnipotent. Then a degree of consciousness can be realized of which nothing at the present time can give us an idea. In the Middle Ages, the highest result of the world, at least of the planet Earth, was a choir of monks chanting psalms. The science of our epoch, responding to the desire which the world feels for knowing itself, attains very superior effects. The College of France is far beyond the most perfect Abbey of the Order of the Cistercians. The future will, no doubt, bring about far finer results still. In the infinite, the absolute Being, having reached the acme of his deific evolutions, and understanding himself perfectly, will, perhaps, realize these fine verses of the Christian mysticism :

> Illic secum habitans in penetralibus,
> Se rex ipse suo contuitu beat.*

III.

Thus the two fundamental dogmas of religion, God and immortality, remain rationally undemonstrable ; but one cannot say that they are smitten with absolute impossibility. The touching efforts of humanity to save these two dogmas must not be

* Dwelling alone in strictest solitude, the king delights in his happiness.

censured as being a pure chimera. A general consciousness of the universe, a soul of the world, are things which experience has never proved; but a molecule from one of our bones has no suspicion of the general consciousness of the body of which it forms a part, of that which constitutes our unity. The most logical attitude of the thinker in the presence of religion is to act as though it were true. One must behave as though God and the soul existed. Religion thus comes under the head of those numerous hypotheses, such as the ether, the electric, nervous, luminous, and caloric fluids, the atom itself, which we are well aware are only symbols, convenient means of explaining phenomena, and which we uphold all the same. God, creating the world by virtue of profound calculations, is a very coarse formula; but things conduct themselves very nearly as though that was what did take place. The soul does not exist as a separate substance; but things go on very much as though it did exist. Nothing has ever been revealed to any human family by supernatural voices, and yet revelation is a metaphor which religious history finds it difficult to dispense with. The eternal paradise promised to man has no reality, and nevertheless, it is necessary to act as though it had; it is necessary that those who do not believe in it should surpass in goodness and in abnegation those who do believe in it.

People are accustomed to present these two

great consolatory dogmas, God and immortality, as the postulates of the moral life of Christianity ; and certainly, this is right, in many respects. To act for God, to act in the presence of God, are conceptions requisite to a virtuous life. We do not demand a rewarder ; but we do wish for a witness. The recompense of the cuirassiers of Reichsofen in eternity is the phrase of the old Emperor : "Oh ! the brave fellows !" We should like a phrase of that sort from God. Sacrifices ignored, virtue misunderstood, the inevitable errors of human justice, the irrefutable calumnies of history, render legitimate, or rather lead fatally to, an appeal from the consciousness oppressed by fatality to the consciousness of the universe. This is a right which the virtuous man will never renounce. In the heroic situations of the Revolution, the necessity of the immortality of the soul was claimed by nearly all parties. The solicitude of the men of that epoch for their memoirs and their justificatory documents, depended on the same principle. They wrote and wrote, persuaded that there would be someone to read them. They imperatively demanded a judge beyond the tomb ; they demanded it from the consciousness of the world, or from the consciousness of humanity. Humanity is thus driven to bay in this singular pass without exit that, the more it reflects, the more it perceives the moral necessity of God and immortality, and the better also it perceives the

difficulties which rise against the dogmas whose necessity it affirms.

These difficulties are of the gravest; they must not be concealed. Ancient religious ideas were founded on the narrow concept of a world created several thousand years ago, of which the earth and man were the center. A little earth containing a computable number of inhabitants, a little heaven surmounting it like a cupola, a celestial court a few leagues away in the air, all busied with the childish affairs of mankind, with the Isles of the Blessed, situated to the Westward, whither the dead betake themselves in a bark, or a paper paradise, which the slightest scientific reflection will tear asunder, that is a world which a God with a great white beard can easily wrap in the folds of his garment. When Nimrod launched his arrows against heaven, they returned to him stained with blood; we may shoot as we will, the arrows no longer return to us. The enlargement of the idea of the world, and the scientific demolition of the ancient anthropocentric hypothesis, in the sixteenth century, is the capital moment in the history of the human mind. Aristarchus of Samos had the first gleam of light on that point, and he was considered impious. The rage of the Church against the founders of the new order—Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, Galileo—was sufficiently consistent in the same line. The little world over which the Church had reigned, with its dogmas restricted to the earth, was irrevocably

broken. The most modern views upon the ages of nature and the revolutions of the globe, by throwing open to man the perspective of the infinite of past time, have had the same result in a still more conclusive fashion.

We shall not be able to reconstruct the ancient dreams. If the law of the world were a narrow fanaticism, if error were the condition of human morality, there would be no reason to take an interest in a globe vowed to ignorance. We love humanity because it produces science; we hold fast to morality because honest races alone can be scientific races. If we were to set ignorance as the necessary limit of humanity, we should no longer see any reason for caring about its existence. The humanity which the reactionaries invoke by their desires would be so insignificant that I should prefer to see it perish by anarchy and lack of morality, rather than by folly. The return of humanity to its ancient errors, regarded as indispensable to its morality, would be worse than its utter demoralization.

Hence we must make our choice, and in our views of the universe avoid the absurdity of the provincials, who seeing nothing beyond their own clock-tower, imagine that all the world is troubling itself about their affairs, that the king's sole solicitude is for their petty town, that God even has an opinion about the petty cliques into which it is split up. Humanity is in the world what an ant-

hill is in a forest. The internal revolutions of an ant-hill, its decadence, its ruin, are secondary matters in the history of a forest. If humanity suffers shipwreck for lack of knowledge or virtue—if it fails in its vocation, its duties—analogous occurrences have taken place thousands of times in the history of the universe. Let us then take care not to believe that postulates are the measure of reality. Nature is not obliged to bend to our little conventions. To this declaration of man: "I cannot be virtuous without such or such a chimera," the Eternal has a right to reply; "So much the worse for you. Your chimeras will not force me to change the order of fatality."

What still further weakens *a priori* reasoning on this point is, that among the postulates of humanity, there are some which are notoriously impossible. It must be noted well that the God which the greater part of humanity assumes is not the God situated in the infinite, whose existence we admit as possible. That God is too distant for piety to attach itself to. What the vulgar herd wishes is a God who certainly does not exist, a God who busies himself about rain and fair weather, about war and peace, about the jealousies of men among each other, who can be made to change his mind by importunity. Humanity, in other terms, would like to have a God for itself, a God who takes an interest in its quarrels, a special God of the planet, ruling it like a good governor,

like the provincial gods dreamed of by paganism in its decadence. Each nation goes further; it would like to have a God for itself alone. An idol would suit it still better, and, if a free course were accorded to the desires of men, they would claim powers for their national relics, for their sacred images.* How many postulates which will not be taken into account in the least! Man needs a God who shall be in conformity with his planet, his century, his country: does it follow that such a God exists? Man has need of personal immortality: does it follow that this immortality exists? In other words, man is in despair at forming part of an infinite world in which he counts for zero. A paradise composed of a decillion of beings is not at all the little family paradise, where people know each other, where they continue to be neighborly, to barter and intrigue together. God must be petitioned to contract the world, to put Copernicus in the wrong, to bring us back to the cosmos of the Campo Santo of Pisa, surrounded by nine choirs of angels, and held in the arms of Christ.

Thus we arrive at this strange result, that

* This is why vulgar devotion goes further in the case of the saints than with God. Pure deism will never be the religion of the people; in fact the deist and the common herd do not adore the same God. There exists here a certain misunderstanding, with which a certain philosophy has been able to cover itself in time of war, but over which it must cherish a scruple in time of peace.

immortality is, *a priori*, the most necessary of dogmas and, *a posteriori*, the most feeble. Like the ant or the bee, we work from instinct at common tasks, whose bearing we do not see. The bees would cease their toil, if they read articles which told them that their honey would be taken from them, that they would be killed in recompense for their toil. Man goes on still in spite of his *sic vos non vobis*—this do ye, but not for yourselves. We see neither that which is above us, nor that which is beneath us. "We are the chain-gang," a man of superior mind said to me. The divine intentions are obscure. We are one of the millions of *fellahs* who worked at the Pyramids. The result is the Pyramid. The work is anonymous, but it lasts; each one of the workmen lives in it. What would really not be unjust, is what the factory workmen are demanding, that we should be associated in the work of the universe in the matter of participating in the profits, that we should, at least, know something of the results of our labors. Now, though admitted to the labors, we are not admitted to the dividends, and even our salary is very badly paid to us. Others would get up a strike; as for us, we go on just the same.

Upon the whole, the existence of a consciousness superior to the universe is much more probable than individual immortality. We have no other foundation for our hopes in this respect than the great presumption as to the goodness of the

Supreme Being. Everything will be possible to him one of these days. Let us hope that he will then wish to be just, and that he will then restore, to those who have contributed to the triumph, the consciousness of life. This will be a miracle. But the miracle, that is to say, the intervention of a Superior Being, which does not take place now, may possibly, some day, when God shall be conscious, be the normal rule of the universe. The Judæo-Christian dreams, placing the reign of God at the termination of humanity, will still preserve their grandiose truth. The world, now governed by a blind or impotent consciousness, may be governed some day by a more thoughtful consciousness. All injustice will then be repaired, all tears dried. *Absterget deus omnem lacrymam ab oculis eorum*—God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The pearl oyster appears to me to be the best image of the universe, and of the degree of consciousness which we must assume in the whole. At the bottom of the abyss, obscure germs create a singular consciousness badly served by organs yet tremendously clever in attaining its ends. What is called a malady of their little living cosmos, superinduces a secretion of ideal beauty, the possession of which men dispute with each other at cost of gold. The general life of the universe is, like that of the oyster, vague, obscure, singularly restricted, slow in consequence. Suffering creates mind, intellectual and moral movement. Malady

of the world, if you will, pearl of the world in reality, the mind is the goal, the final cause, the last and certainly the most brilliant result of the world which we inhabit. It is very probable that, if there are ulterior results, they are of an infinitely more elevated order.

THE END.

AUGUST 21, 1929
McLEAN'S
PASADENA

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 023 648 9